

THE IMPACT OF THE WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT
STATUS ON FIRST-TIME PARENTS' OCCUPATIONAL
AND FAMILIAL ROLES

By

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FIRST-TIME PARENTS' OCCUPATIONAL AND FAMILIAL ROLES

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This research examined the impact of a first birth on husbands' and wives' occupational and familial role satisfaction and involvement. The familial roles researched included parental, marital, and domestic roles. The occupational roles varied according to the wife's employment status at six to nine months postpartum. Three employment groups were examined: (1) husband and wife both employed full-time; (2) husband employed full-time, wife employed part-time; and (3) husband employed full-time, wife unemployed. Role satisfaction was assessed from obtained scale ratings of parental crisis, parental gratification, and marital satisfaction. Role involvement was measured from the husbands' and wives' perceptions of role expectations, childcare task allocations, and familial and occupational role participation levels.

Both mothers and fathers reported high levels of marital and parental role satisfaction regardless of the mother's employment status. No differences in satisfaction were found among the three groups of husbands and wives when

analyzed separately. Gender, however, was found to be a significant variable, with wives perceiving higher levels of marital and parental satisfaction than husbands.

There were significant differences, however, in the role expectations and childcare task allocations reported among the wives and husbands in the three employment groups. Fully employed mothers differed significantly from other mothers on occupational, parental, and domestic role participation levels. For fathers, males whose wives were unemployed reported significantly lower levels of parental role participation, domestic role participation, and domestic role salience than were reported by other fathers. In addition, measurements of childcare task allocation differentiated couples with unemployed wives from employed couples. Mothers in all three groups, however, reported assuming greater responsibility for childcare tasks than did fathers.

It was concluded that reported levels of role satisfaction may be mediated by role expectations and role task structuring, with satisfaction being related to the degree that expectations were met. It was also speculated that the high levels of marital and parental satisfaction obtained in this study might be attributed to (1) the high percentage of planned births, (2) the postponement of the first birth with regard to age and educational level of the parents, and (3) the availability of financial resources.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Cigars are bought. Flowers arrive. Congratulations, gifts, and cards abound. A baby has been born, and the proud, new parents are ecstatic with their accomplishment. It has taken nine long months to receive the fruits of their labor, but the birth has finally occurred and the joy of first-time parenthood has overwhelmed them. Motherhood has made a woman out of the wife; fatherhood has made a man out of the husband. It is an event never to be forgotten.

This portrayal of first-time parenthood is not unusual. It is depicted in movies, novels, and even in parenthood instruction manuals. Perhaps more important is the fact that this portrayal represents the hopes and dreams of all who embark on the uncertain journey of new parenthood. While it is unfortunate that social circumstances do not allow this script to be read for all couples, at least one line of the stereotypical portrayal always rings true. The line is the one describing first-time parenthood as "an event never to be forgotten." In fact, not only will the event never be forgotten, but few,

if any, events will ever come close to having as great an impact on the couple as does the birth of the first child.

Scope of the Problem

There are many reasons for investigating the significance of this impact. First, the couple unit must undergo a major structural change from being a dyad to becoming a triad. Traditionally, researchers have labeled this structural change as the formation or birth of the family unit. Given that forming a family unit remains the norm for a majority of adults in the United States, one would expect an impressive body of social and psychological research to have been published on this transitional stage in a couple's life-span. This, however, is not the case. In actuality, only about 1% of published family studies found in sociological journals deal with the question of how children affect the couple or parents (Atkinson and Gecas, 1978). Instead, most past research has focused on the effect that couple or parental behavior has on the developing child, which leaves shrouded in mystery such topics as how the couple relates during pregnancy, what stresses new parents face with the birth of their first child, the interactional dynamics of new parents, and the actual process by which the child is integrated into the family unit.

Considering the paucity of research conducted to date on this critical life stage, it is not surprising that

such process-oriented questions as posed above have not been methodically researched; however, other conditions exist which also make this transitional period worthy of study. These conditions are the societal and individual pressures which exist in conjunction with, and perhaps as a result of, the structural reorganization from a dyadic to triadic unit. Most overt are this culture's societal pressures encountered by new parents. For example, the instant that couples become parents they are bombarded with advice on how to create the healthy, happy baby. This plethora of information ranges from the best diaper to buy to how to hold, feed, and love your baby. Overnight, society expects couples to shift successfully from student status to full professorship in the field of baby care (Rossi, 1968), while never losing sight of the far reaching effects that their behavior may have on the future psychological health of their child. It is no wonder that new parents are immediately overpowered by one unique aspect of the new situation in which they find themselves; that is, the social dictate which specifies that parenthood, unlike marriage, is irrevocable. This untried drama of parent-child interaction is to go on for as long as life itself.

Such societal pressures have an obvious relationship to the individual pressures felt by new parents. The changes in life style patterns resulting from the structural reorganization from dyad to triad, along with society's expectations for these changes to occur happily

and smoothly, may create an inordinate amount of stress and disruption for each member of the couple system. In fact, it was recognition of this potential stress which led to the first research conducted on the "transition to parenthood."

It is not extraordinary that the ideas for this line of research were developed during the 1950s. During this era America's expectations for the modern, affluent, and happy family were at a peak. Such high expectations for the family, in conjunction with the baby boom, served to emphasize the importance of the transition to a family unit. Concurrently, many other researchers began conceptualizing the family as a system-oriented unit with properties meriting further definition. Hence, both the social and scientific interest in the family at this time led specific researchers to view the birth of a couple's first child as a "critical life event" (LeMasters, 1957).

Specifically, two major stages of scientific inquiry influenced the direction taken in the transition to parenthood research. First was Reuben Hill's (1949) conceptualization of crisis in Families Under Stress. Hill defined crisis as "any sharp or decisive change for which old patterns are found unrewarding and new ones are called for immediately" (Russell, 1974, p. 294). Utilizing this definition, LeMaster's (1957) suggested that the arrival of a first-born could constitute a crisis as the couple painfully reorganized their patterns to accommodate a three-person system. Hence, many studies, designed to investigate

the newborn's effect on the parents, anticipated a stressful transition and sought to measure the amount of "crisis" experienced by first-time parents. These studies may be categorized as the "parenthood-as-crisis" approach in the transition research.

Since studies following this crisis research model reported mixed results, criticisms of both the measurement procedures used in this research and the narrow conceptualization of the first birth as a "crisis" surfaced. To broaden the scope of the information looked at in the transition to parenthood experience, several researchers began to focus on how the new parental role impacted on a couple's existing marital role. Parenthood was viewed by these researchers as a stage transition in the development of a couple's relationship; hence, the marriage relationship was expected to change as role transitions occurred in this developmental phase of adulthood. Since evaluation of the marital relationship, at the time, concerned itself with measurements of marital satisfaction, this second stage of research inquiry is best categorized as the "marital satisfaction/family development" approach to the transition to parenthood.

A more recent approach, termed the "process-oriented social interaction" approach, seeks to describe the changes occurring in the couple across a variety of different life roles. In addition to the marital and parental roles, the occupational and domestic roles are

examined. Building upon both the marital satisfaction studies and the crisis research tradition, this approach attempts to incorporate aspects of past research, as well as to view the transition to parenthood as a process rather than an outcome.

This study is based on the premise that an adequate understanding of the transition to parenthood phase of adult life requires a framework which takes into account the multiple role contexts in which new parents find themselves. From this perspective, rather than view occupational and familial (marital, parental, and domestic) roles as constituting "two separate and nonoverlapping worlds" (Kanter, 1977, p. 8), it is imperative that research be conducted which takes into account the interactions which occur among these roles during the transition to parenthood stage.

Need for the Study

The importance of examining the intersection between occupational and familial roles cannot be overemphasized. The transition to parenthood is not an isolated event. Rather, the assumption of parental roles occurs in the midst of a complex set of ongoing life roles such as career, marital, and domestic roles. Finding the time and energy to commit oneself to the new and very demanding role of parenting may cause drastic shifts in the amount of time and energy committed to other central life roles.

These shifts, and the role conflict accompanying them during the transition to parenthood, have become more evident in contemporary society since women have become more prominent in the nation's labor force. No longer do women automatically embrace full-time motherhood. For many families maintaining two paychecks is a desirable, if not necessary, choice; hence, the transition to becoming parents inevitably forces couples to make decisions regarding their occupational and family roles.

Unfortunately, most parenting research to date has not accounted for the interaction between men's and women's work and family roles. Several theorists have stated that increases in women's educational and labor force attainments have made much of the previous research on this family stage outmoded (Alpert, 1981). They have underscored the need for additional research which examines these varied life roles. While several research studies have begun to note the importance of variables such as age, education, and employment status in relation to the transition to parenthood, few studies have focused on employment status as a major mediating variable during this critical life stage. Hoffman (1973) noted that higher educational and occupational positions of wives increased the mothers' commitments to continue paid employment. LaRossa and LaRossa (1981) suggested that the wife's employment status may be an important variable in qualifying the relationship between parenthood and family interactions. Entwistle and

Doering (1981) noted that employment and early parenting roles were not easily combined by the women in their sample. These researchers further noted that role conflict, with respect to the wife's job, may be the prime source of emotional difficulties in the postpartum period (Entwistle and Doering, 1981). Lastly, research specifically focused on the working mother has observed that greater degrees of role conflict were experienced by mothers who work part-time rather than full-time (Paloma, 1972; Scanzoni, 1978). These mothers appear more frustrated by their inability to participate fully in either childrearing or in their occupational field than do unemployed or fully employed mothers. Resentment in the workplace is also fostered by a part-time mother's inability to commit herself totally to her job's demands.

Despite these observations most transition to parenthood researchers have continued to design research studies with very little regard to the very different employment contexts within which many couples today may find themselves. Investigators have not attempted to determine if differences exist in marital and parental role satisfaction as a result of a couple's occupational commitments. Specific questions which need to be addressed are as follows: Does the couple's employment situation affect marital satisfaction in the postpartum period? Does the couple's employment situation affect the allocation of childcare tasks divided between the spouses? Does the

couple's employment situation influence the degree of crisis or gratification reported by new parents? Does the couple's employment situation influence the degree of commitment made to marital, parental, and domestic life roles? Conversely, do spouses' commitments to their family roles influence the couple's employment situation? Since occupational commitments can demand up to one-half of the new parent's waking hours, it is reasonable to assume that variances in this particular life role may have a tremendous impact on a couple's ability to maintain satisfactory levels of marital and parental role involvements.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate husbands' and wives' occupational and familial role experiences following the birth of a couple's first child. Familial roles researched included parental, marital, and domestic or home maintenance roles. Occupational roles were varied according to the wife's employment status at six to nine months postpartum. The husbands' and wives' experiences in these different roles were examined by analyzing their ratings of parental crisis, parental gratification, marital satisfaction, perceived ideal childcare task allocation, perceived real childcare task allocation, and levels of role salience and role participation for the parental, marital, domestic, and

occupational roles. This research was intended to be a preliminary examination of how a couple's employment situation impacts upon the transition to parenthood experience.

Statement of the Problem

The specific problem examined in this study was the effect that the birth of a first child had on perceptions of parental crisis, parental gratification, and marital role satisfaction for three groups of couples differing in their employment situations. These three groups were (1) couples in which both the husband and the wife were employed full-time, (2) couples in which the husband was employed full-time while the wife was employed part-time, and (3) couples in which the husband was employed full-time and the wife was unemployed.

Two variables which may have influenced the ratings of role satisfaction reported by couples in these three groups were also examined. ^vThe variables were (1) levels of role salience and role participation for the occupational, marital, parental, and domestic roles, and (2) role allocation of specific childcare tasks.

Significance of the Study

As noted, only three employment classifications were used in this research. Differences in these classifications depended upon the mother's employment status

with the prerequisite that the father maintained full-time employment. This particular approach was based on historical tradition in that in most situations it was the wife's employment which underwent changes following the birth of a child. Entwisle and Doering (1981) state that "if the mother's job and baby care could not be reconciled, she, not her husband, made the work adjustments" (p. 216). Furthermore, many couples still lean in the direction of a woman's place is in the home with preschool children" (Entwisle and Doering, 1981, p. 262).

Since changes often occur in the couple's employment situation following the birth of a first child, this study's approach to investigating the impact of the first birth as mediated by the couple's occupational commitments may have important implications for research, theory, and practice. If employment status were found to be significantly related to differing degrees of reported marital or parental role satisfaction in the postpartum period of first-time parents, then future research could address more specific issues concerning how roles are experienced by men and women involved in these various life roles and what coping strategies are used to manage the roles in conflict. Research will also need to adopt a longitudinal frame of reference for studying the parenthood experience. Parenthood is a lifelong commitment that is in a constant state of flux. More children may be added to a family which may again alter a couple's commitment to and

involvement in these various life roles. Future research will need to examine these changes within a framework conceptualizing occupational, marital, and parental life roles as reciprocating influences in adult development.

Theory on role interactions, including role involvement and role conflict, need also become more cohesive as research begins to examine the effect that changes in occupational and family roles may have on adult development at specific stages in the life cycle. The transition to parenthood is considered to be a critical turning point in adult development. At this one stage of life, important decisions involving occupational and family commitments must be made. These decisions can change for life the opportunities afforded to both men and women in their occupational fields, and the satisfactions obtained from their family environment. Theories of adult development could also become more comprehensive as developmental stage models incorporate a clearer understanding of the nature of occupational and family role interactions.

Finally, these theoretical advances can, in turn, be applied in practice for parenthood education program development. New information on how parental roles may be integrated with other life roles could be presented in family life education programs as a service to new or prospective parents. These types of programs may be viewed

as necessary first steps in obtaining broader changes in society's view of the gender roles of parents in the work force and in the home.

The method chosen to investigate the interactions of occupational and familial roles among the three chosen employment groups was a mailed questionnaire. Time and financial limitations were the motivating factors involved in this research choice.

Definition of Terms

To further one's understanding of the research hypotheses outlined in Chapter III, the following terms are clarified:

familial roles: refers to parental, marital, and domestic or home maintenance roles.

couple: a unit comprised of a man and woman legally married and currently living with one another, and who have become first-time parents within the past nine months.

employment status: refers to the number of hours per week given to jobs outside of household demands by men and women involved in this research.

- husband employed full-time, wife employed full-time: refers to both parents working at least 40 hours per week not including household or childcare demands.

- husband employed full-time, wife employed part-time: refers to situations where the husband works 40 or more hours per week while the wife works 15-20 hours per week not including household or childcare demands.

- husband employed full-time, wife unemployed: refers to situations where the husband works 40 or more hours per week while the wife is not gainfully employed. The husband's employment hours do not include household or childcare demands.

marital satisfaction: an attitude of greater or lesser favorability toward one's own marital relationship at a given point in time that is measured by scores obtained on the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach, Bowden, and Frazier, 1981, p. 537).

parental crisis: any change in self, spouse, or relationships with significant others which the respondent defines as "bothersome" as measured by items on the Hobbs Crisis Index (1965).

parental gratification: the satisfaction and/or fulfillment experienced by respondents since the birth of their first child as measured by items on the Russell Gratification Checklist (1974).

level of occupational role salience: the degree of self investment and satisfaction that is expected from one's occupational role.

level of marital salience: the degree of self investment and satisfaction that is expected from one's marital role.

level of parental role salience: the degree of self investment and satisfaction that is expected from one's parental role.

level of domestic role salience: the degree of self investment and satisfaction that is expected from one's home maintenance role.

level of occupational role involvement: the degree to which one perceives oneself as being responsible for the implementation of the occupational role.

level of marital role involvement: the degree to which one perceives oneself as being responsible for the implementation of the marital role.

level of parental role involvement: the degree to which one perceives oneself as being responsible for the implementation of the parental role.

level of domestic role involvement: the degree to which one perceives oneself as being responsible for the implementation of the domestic role.

childcare task allocation: the assignment of childcare activities to a particular parent with the expectation that the parent should assume

responsibility for the tasks. Assignment may be verbally agreed upon by the spouses, or it may be an unspoken expectation that one spouse will assume responsibility for the task.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter Two contains a review of the related literature. Topics covered include a review of theories and research on the transition to parenthood for first-time parents. A discussion of the research methodology, hypotheses, and data analyses is presented in Chapter Three. Chapter Four describes the research sample and presents the results of the data analyses. Finally, discussion of the results, conclusions, and recommendations for further research appear in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter a review of theories incorporated into research on the transition to parenthood will be discussed. The review is divided into three major sections: (1) the transition to parenthood as crisis, (2) the effect of the transition to parenthood on marital satisfaction, and (3) an interaction approach to the transition to parenthood. These divisions are time sequenced in that the first section illustrates the beginning stages of research on this critical stage of adult life, with the remaining two sections illustrating how later research has built upon previous studies. In addition, each section considers conceptual and methodological problems inherent in the research to date. Finally, a summary of the research is provided which integrates concepts presented throughout the chapter.

The Transition to Parenthood as Crisis: Theory and Research

In 1957, LeMasters pioneered the transition to parenthood research with his article describing first-time

parenthood as a crisis of accession. Using the definition that Hill (1949) developed in his study of war separation and reunion crises among family members, LeMasters startled family scholars by applying the term crisis to an event deemed to be both conventional and ordinary by cultural standards. Yet if the idea behind the study was shocking, LeMasters' published results were even more surprising. Eighty-three percent of the couples jointly interviewed in the project retrospectively assessed the birth of their first child as an "extensive" or "severe" crisis period. These results were arrived at by agreement between the interviewer and the couple, and were based on the following five-point scale: (1) no crisis, (2) slight crisis, (3) moderate crisis, (4) extensive crisis, and (5) severe crisis. Other notable results of the study included the citation of concerns associated with the amount of crisis. Those who viewed their adjustment to parenthood in the extensive to severe crisis range mentioned concerns over loss of sleep, chronic tiredness, confinement to the home, loss of social contact, loss of job, additional housework, guilt over parenting abilities, long hours, decline in housekeeping standards, and worry over appearance. In addition to these concerns, the spouses or fathers added the following: economic worries, second pregnancy concerns, decline in the sexual responsiveness of the wife, and a general disenchantment with the parental role.

The unexpected, yet realistically plausible, results of the LeMasters' study spurred an immediate interest in further parenthood-as-crisis research, and the subsequent investigative focus became centered on the following question: Does the transition to parenthood constitute a "crisis"? With the exception of the LeMasters (1957) article and its initial follow-up study (Dyer, 1963), the sole criterion for answering this question became based on a 23-item checklist developed by Hobbs in 1965.

Looking first at Dyer's (1963) research design, it is noted that essentially the investigator attempted to replicate LeMasters' original findings. Dyer administered a Likert-type crisis scale to a nonprobability sample of 32 urban, middle-class white couples whose first child had been born within a previous two-year period. Like LeMasters, Dyer used a five-point scale to obtain the crisis score for each couple. Use of a questionnaire, however, was substituted for the conjoint interviews to obtain other data. In support of the original findings, Dyer reported that 53% of the couples in his study had experienced "extensive" or "severe" crisis in adjusting to the birth of the first child. Similar feelings to those reported by LeMasters were also noted and included confinement, fatigue, anticlimax, economic pressures, plus sharing with grandparents and other relatives.

Gaining impetus from the aforementioned studies of first-time parenthood, Hobbs (1965, 1968) and his colleagues (Hobbs and Cole, 1976; Hobbs and Wimbish, 1977) have published a succession of articles designed to replicate, reassess, and extend the parenthood-as-crisis research series. To verify the reliability of the LeMasters and Dyer findings, Hobbs (1965) designed a study with more control than either of the previously discussed projects. First, since Hobbs' main objective was to determine if LeMasters' and Dyers' results obtained from nonprobability samples of middle-class couples were generalizable to a probability sample of first-time parents, the researcher used public birth records and drew a random sample of first-time parents who were white, resided within the city limits, and whose first child had been born within the past 3-18 weeks. All social classes from lower-lower to upper-middle were represented in the sample. Secondly, unlike his predecessors, Hobbs (1965) developed an objectively scored checklist of 23 items to index the extent of crisis associated with the arrival of the first child. This checklist, while derived from the difficult feelings reported by parents in the LeMasters and Dyer articles, served to decrease the extent to which the investigator could influence a couple's responses; hence, Hobbs' (1965) new measure incorporated a control for threats to the external validity of the research.

With these new research controls in effect, Hobbs (1965) reported results which were significantly different from those of LeMasters (1957) and Dyer (1963). In fact, none of the 53 randomly selected couples from the Hobbs (1965) study were classified as having an "extensive" or "severe" crisis in relation to the birth of the first child. Instead, the majority of couples (86.8%) experienced only a "slight" crisis, the modal response category. Furthermore, the majority of subjects (70% of the women, 91% of the men) reported their marriages as happier and more satisfying than before the arrival of the baby.

Because of such divergent findings, replication and extension of the first three studies seemed essential to the researchers. Hence, in 1968, Hobbs extended his study to include a comparison between crisis scores obtained by use of his checklist and scores obtained through focused interviews such as those used by LeMasters (1957). Beauchamp, in a study reported by Jacoby (1969), independently employed a methodology similar to the Hobbs' extended study. Interestingly, both researchers found that although the interview method yielded higher crisis scores than did the checklist, there were still significantly fewer mothers and fathers coded as having experienced a "severe" crisis than were reported in the LeMasters (1957) and Dyer (1963) research projects. Furthermore, noting that mothers' mean crisis scores were significantly higher than fathers' mean scores, and that these scores appeared to correlate

negatively with marital adjustment, Hobbs (1968) suggested that it seemed "very probable that variables other than the child [were] complicating the experiences of beginning parenthood and [thus] confounding [the] research findings" (p.416).

This conclusion had also occurred to other researchers in this field during the 1960s. To begin the empirical verification and specification of these "other variables," Meyerowitz and Feldman (1966) interviewed 400 couples on three occasions over a 10-month period regarding the effect of pregnancy and birth on different aspects of the marital relationship. While specific complaints such as increased sexual incompatibility, unshared leisure time, and a notable shift to a patriarchal power structure were evidenced, it was still found that for the mean percentage of time "things [were] going well" (p.79). Meyerowitz and Feldman (1968) thus concluded that the crisis of the first child should be viewed as a "significant transitional point in maturation of the marital relationship--transition from the dyadic state to a more mature and rewarding triadic system " (p.84).

In a theoretical reassessment of the parenthood-as-crisis research, Jacoby (1969) critically reviewed and noted the conceptual limitations of the few studies which had been published to date. Specifically noted were the limitations imposed by use of a checklist that yielded "crisis" scores. Jacoby (1969) states:

it seems likely that any accession research oriented around "crisis" will provide the investigator with only a partial picture of the adjustments required by the parenthood role. An interest in the positive gratifications associated with the arrival of a child would seem equally appropriate to sociological research focusing on parenthood as a developmental stage. Empirical investigations of the rewards of parenthood are few. (p. 722)

Despite these criticisms, however, Hobbs did not change his approach in the studies published after Jacoby's article (Hobbs and Cole, 1976; Hobbs and Wimbish, 1977) and essentially replicated his earlier studies except for the fact that one of the replications (Hobbs and Wimbish, 1977) used black couples instead of white couples. Nevertheless, one parenthood-as-crisis researcher did consider Jacoby's suggestion and designed her study accordingly. That researcher, Candyce Russell (1974), while attempting to parallel Hobbs' 1968 study, chose to counteract the purely negative aspects of parenthood (measured as crisis scores by the Hobbs Index) by including a 12-item gratification checklist which was intended to tap into aspects of parenthood enjoyed by new parents. Excluding the gratification measure, other aspects of study such as sampling procedures replicated the Hobbs' (1968) research. Additionally, Russell's (1974) results supported the previous findings reported by Hobbs and colleagues (1976, 1977), which included data supporting the following: (1) that the majority of new mothers and fathers experience only a "slight" crisis (57.5% and 75.1% respectively), (2) that

mothers' mean crisis scores are significantly higher than the fathers' scores, and (3) that most new parents note a general improvement in the marital relationship following the birth of the child.

A second improvement, which should be credited to Russell's (1974) study, is the increased systematization of both the correlates of the crisis and gratification scores. Russell noted that measures of marital adjustment, planned pregnancy, problem-free pregnancy and delivery, number of years married, and quiet babies were negatively correlated with high crisis scores, while premarital conception, low priority of fatherhood to the father, and ill health of the wife were positively correlated with crisis scores. Furthermore, with regard to high parental gratification scores, negative correlates included the years of education for both the husband and the wife, occupational prestige, and the length of marriage for wives over 23 years of age, while positive correlates of gratification included measures of marital and adjustment, a desire for more children, and the priority given to both the father role and the mother role. It is important to note also that the respondents in Russell's (1974) study checked a far higher proportion of "gratification" items than "crisis" items on the respective checklists. Russell concluded that for most couples the satisfaction from first-time parenthood clearly mitigated the severity of its crisis.

In agreement with this conclusion, unpublished articles by Uhlenberg (1970), Tooke (1974), and Bogdanoff (1974) also found that adjustment to first-time parenthood was not necessarily describable in "crisis" terminology, but depended instead on factors such as age, planning of the pregnancy, sex of parent, and preparation for childbirth.

In light of the previous descriptions of studies belonging to the parent-as-crisis research series, two major problem areas become evident: (1) conceptual problems, and (2) methodological problems. In both cases, the problems are serious, and must be given careful consideration and thought before one may proceed with further study of the development of the research on first-time parenthood.

Conceptual Problems

In many ways, the conceptual framing of first-time parenthood as a "crisis" period was unfortunate in that it emphasized a singular and individualistic picture of the adjustments required of new parenthood. In other words, the research became focused on individual evaluations of the negative or disruptive aspects of becoming new parents, and did not take into account such issues as (1) what is considered normal activity during the transition to parenthood; (2) whether change is viewed by the couple as negative, positive, or neutral; (3) what attitudinal and behavioral changes are required of first-time parents; and (4) what are the rewards of new parenthood.

The narrowness of the crisis focus is even more surprising when one notes the comments made by the parenthood-as-crisis researchers in their own articles:

- Hobbs (1965) presently an attitude of 'back-to-the drawing-board' would appear warranted . . . More precise definitions of variables, including the concept of crisis, are needed.. More careful assessment of marriage relationships, social behavior, and living patterns before the first child is born is essential. (p. 372)
- Hobbs (1968) on the basis of the present investigation, it would seem more accurate to view the addition of the first child to the marriages as a period of transition...than to conceptualize beginning parenthood as a crisis experience for the majority of new parents. (p.417)
- Hobbs and Cole (1976) shifting from a crisis orientation to a more comprehensive approach ...is clearly necessary. (p. 730)
- Russell (1974) Simmel's observation that a third member is disruptive of dyadic affection and intimacy, while intriguing...is generally not supported by this research. (p.294)

Hence, while continuing to research the crisis aspects of first-time parenthood, investigators recognized the need for a broader conceptual orientation for the study of new parenthood. It was becoming apparent that Simmel's propositions describing the third member of the triad as a disruptive intruder did not fully explain the dynamics of family orientation. Indeed, it is even interesting to note

that three years prior to the publications of the first parenthood-as-crisis research, Strodbeck (1954) clearly warned against the direct application of Simmel's theory to the family unit.

Methodological Problems

Due to the extensive reliance on unstructured interviews (Beauchamp, as cited in Jacoby, 1969; LeMasters, 1957) semi-structured interviews (Hobbs, 1968; Meyerowitz and Feldman, 1966), and crisis questionnaires and checklists (Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1965; 1968; Hobbs and Cole, 1976; Hobbs and Wimbish, 1977; Russell, 1974; Uhlenberg, 1970), one may easily conclude that measurement is one of the major methodological problems inherent in parenthood-as-crisis research series. With regard to the use of the interviewing processes, both the internal and external validity of the results obtained from these methods must be questioned. Since the researchers do not detail what, if any, controls were used in their interviewing methods, one can only assume that such threats to validity as changes in the measuring instrument (in this case the interviewer) or experimenter expectations could be operating and biasing the responses obtained in the interview. Likewise, one must question the validity of the continued use of the Hobbs Crisis Index. While persistent use of this checklist has verified its reliability, no studies to date have tested the issue of its validity.

A secondary problem related to the measuring instruments is the lack of a standardized method for reporting the "crisis scores," which the measuring devices purport to estimate. The assignment of scale scores from (1)=no crisis to (5)=severe crisis appears to have been arbitrary, and it is quite possible that a different scoring procedure could have resulted in a very different profile of first-time parenthood. Furthermore, direct comparison between the five crisis scale scores obtained from such differing methods as interviews and checklists is not acceptable, and the studies should have clarified this problem for the reader.

Another serious methodological problem noted in the crisis series research is the problem of sampling. In all cases, the sampling procedures used have severely limited the generalizability of the results obtained in the parenthood-as-crisis research. The sampling methods used have ranged from nonprobability samples of urban, middle-class white couples (Beauchamp, as cited in Jacoby, 1969; Dyer, 1963; LeMasters, 1957), to random samples of urban, middle-class white couples (Hobbs, 1965) to random samples of urban lower- to middle-class white couples (Hobbs, 1968; Hobbs and Cole, 1976; Russell, 1974) to random samples of urban, lower- to middle-class black couples (Hobbs and Wimbish, 1977). Although the sampling designs did graduate to random procedures, the limitations imposed by environmental factors such as social class and urban residency cannot be ignored.

In addition, most samples consisted of less than 50 couples, with only two studies utilizing sample sizes greater than 200 couples (Meyerowitz and Feldman, 1966; Russell, 1974). Clearly, studies with larger and more representative samples of the American population are necessary if significant generalizations concerning the transition to parenthood are to be recognized.

One final criticism of the methodology employed in the crisis series research also affects the credibility of the comparisons made between the studies. This criticism is based on the wide variability of infant age at the time that the data were collected. For example, in the LeMasters' (1957) study, the couple's first-born could range in age from new born to five years old. Dyer, (1963) on the other hand, limited his sample to couples with a first child born within the previous two years. Other studies allowed the child's age to range from 3-18 weeks (Hobbs, 1965), or from approximately 6-52 weeks (Hobbs, 1968; Hobbs and Wimbish, 1977; Russell, 1974). Considering the effects that history and maturation can have in studying the development of the child, would it not be logical to assume that parents might also go through dynamic changes in their behaviors and attitudes toward the child's presence during this time period? It appears that these changes would be inevitable, and therefore could affect the parent's evaluation of first-time parenthood as a crisis period.

In summary, the parenthood-as-crisis series may be categorized as the first developmental phase of the transition to parenthood research. While many conceptual and methodological flaws in this series of research studies have been discussed, the importance of these investigations should not go unnoticed. First, this research spurred others to investigate not only the effects that parental behaviors can have on children, but also to study the effects that the presence of children can have on adults' lives. Second, these studies allowed researchers to recognize the narrowness of the conceptual framework viewing first-time parenthood as a crisis, and suggested that broader orientations and better measuring devices be employed in future studies. Finally, researchers conducting these studies began to outline other variables of interest occurring during the transition to parenthood period, such as marital adjustment; couple communications; effects related to educational, socioeconomic, and age levels; and a couple's desire for children. Such factors as these became major focal points of interest in other studies, as will be seen throughout the remainder of this review.

Effect of the Transition to Parenthood
on Marital Satisfaction: Theory and Research

The second approach to be explored in this review of the transition to parenthood literature is known as the marital satisfaction or family development research

orientation. Interestingly enough, while this approach is not as well known as the crisis series, it appears that investigators have asked the research questions attributed to this orientation more frequently and consistently than they have asked questions dealing with other aspects of the transition period. More specifically, the questions focus on how the transition to parenthood impacts upon marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, marital happiness, and marital stress. That these variables are chosen for study is not too surprising since conjugal satisfaction/adjustment is one of the most popular topics in the family life literature (Atkinson and Gecas, 1978).

Before describing the studies of this series in detail, one should note the evolution of this orientation with respect to the crisis series studies in order to fully understand its impact on future research. To begin, one must remember that even as the crisis research was being carried out there were criticisms abounding (Jacoby, 1969), with much of the criticism centered on the use of the term "crisis" in relation to the transition to parenthood period. Even the adoption of the Rapoport's (1963) terminology of the "normal crises" experienced by couples in the honeymoon and engagement stages of marriage did not resolve the debates. Rossi (1963) states the dissatisfaction of researchers most clearly in the following passage:

I think that the time is now ripe to drop the concept of "normal crisis" and to speak directly, instead, of the transition to and impact of parenthood. There is an uncomfortable incongruity in speaking of any crisis as normal... A more fruitful point of departure is to build upon the stage task concepts of Erikson, viewing parenthood as a developmental stage, . . . a perspective carried into the research . . . on adaptation to early years of marriage and . . . on the adjustments involved in pregnancy. (p. 28)

Hence, Rossi (1968) began a trend for researchers to move from their tunnel vision focus on the changes which might constitute a crisis for first-time parents, to instead look more broadly at the couple's reactions to those changes in reference to a developmental stage perspective. No longer was first-time parenthood to be viewed as a simple, homogenous condition. Rather, as a developmental stage, new parenthood could be viewed as a transitional, multi-faceted position in the life cycle.

Naturally, this new perspective for examining first-time parenthood required much discussion and theoretical analysis before it could directly impact on the research. In an attempt to address the concept of viewing the transition to parenthood as a natural developmental stage in a couple's life together, much of the theoretical discussion became centered on role theory hypotheses. Rossi (1968) outlined this theme in considerable detail, using two main analytic devices: (1) a comparison of the structural ways that the parental role differs from other primary adult

roles such as marital and occupational, and (2) a specification of the phases of development of all social roles. Her ideas encompassed an application of four broad stages of a role cycle to parenthood, which included the anticipatory stage, honeymoon stage, plateau stage, and disengagement-termination stage. Rossi's (1968) differentiation of the parental role from other adult roles can be illustrated by comparing the developmental tasks and adjustments associated with each role during the anticipatory stage. For example, tasks and adjustments associated with the marital role included the engagement period, planning for the wedding, and organizing small aspects of the couple's future life together. The anticipatory stage of the occupational role included tasks such as finishing school, apprenticeships, and job seeking. In comparison, however, the parental role during the anticipatory stage encompassed the physical changes of pregnancy and preparing for the infant's arrival both physically and mentally.

As demonstrated, by using the role cycle suggestion as a broader framework for viewing the various aspects of the transition to parenthood, it also becomes easier to delineate the unique and salient features of the parental roles.

Recognition of these features requires that attention be given to both past and current cultural pressures for couples to assume the role of parent at some time during their life together (Bottinelli, 1976; Bram,

1975; Meade and Singh, 1973; Rabin, 1968; Riegel, 1974; Rossi, 1968; Thompson, 1980; Thompson and Thompson, 1979; Wheeler and Olds, 1979), to the criticalness that the timing of a first pregnancy can have on an individual's or couple's development (McLaughlin and Micklin, 1983; Rossi, 1963), to the irrevocability of the parenthood status (Rossi, 1963), and to the fact that there has been, in the past, a significant lack of preparation for assumption of the parenthood role in comparison to other adult roles (Resnick, 1981; Rossi, 1968). Furthermore, the role of parent must fit into certain role requirements of the couple system to provide a delicate balance between the interplay of sex roles, instrumental versus expressive roles (Parsons and Bales, 1955), and parent roles (Rossi, 1963). Deutscher (1969) summarizes the importance of this delicate balance succinctly when he states that "insufficient emphasis is given to the interactive relationships between the wife and husband and the changes that both undergo during the pregnancy in relation to themselves, to one another, and to the transformations of their roles as family members" (p. 319).

From the preceding discussion one may note that the first attention given to the relationship between role theory hypotheses and parenthood was quite broad. Looking at the basic premise of role theory, however, helped researchers to narrow their focus. In other words, using the premise that role theory predicts changes in behavior as

a function of the social position a person fills suggested that researchers could predict that a person's behavior and/or expectations would change as a result of parenthood (Hill and Rodgers, 1964; Feldman, 1971). Hence, a new emphasis began to emerge that combined two aspects of first-time parenthood: (1) that parenthood was a developmental issue, and (2) that the marriage relationship would be expected to change as a result of the role transitions occurring in the developmental phase of parenthood. Since the obvious gauges of the marital relationship, at the time, were concerned with measurement of marital satisfaction, studies from this new series of research merged a developmental approach with marital satisfaction research bringing forward the union known as the Marital Satisfaction/Family Development Approach.

Measuring Marital Satisfaction over the Family Life Cycle

With this new developmental slant for research the transition to parenthood, studies began formulating new hypotheses, utilizing newer measurements, and incorporating larger sample sizes. All these improvements furthered the knowledge of the effects that first-borns have on the couple relationship.

Two studies, in particular, laid the foundation for the marital satisfaction approach. These studies, published by Rollins and Feldman (1970) and Feldman (1971), both based their findings on data collected from an area survey sample

of 852 middle- to upper-class urban couples. The data were obtained under a grant awarded to Feldman from NIMH for the purpose of studying the development of the husband-wife relationship through the family life cycle. Because they used a cross-sectional design, these authors were able to compare the effect that parenthood had on couples at different phases of the family cycle ranging from the beginning family to launching and empty nest families (Duvall, 1967). Their findings, summarized by Feldman (1971), included the following points:

- a) Marital satisfaction follows a curvilinear relationship through the family life cycle, with couples showing higher levels of satisfaction in the early and late years of marriage. Low points were reached in the middle of marriage when children were in school.
- b) Those couples with children had a significantly lower level of marital satisfaction than did those without children.
- c) Those couples with an infant had significantly lower levels of marital satisfaction than did those who were childless, even when the length of the marriage relationship was a controlled variable.

- d) When couples become parents, marital satisfaction declines. This decline can be measured over time from pre to postpartum, with postpartum couples being less satisfied with marriage than they were before the first child was born.
- e) When an increase in marital satisfaction after the birth of the first child was found, there was a positive correlation noted between the increase and the extent to which the couple had a differentiated prepartum marriage relationship. Those couples identified as having a prepartum companionate relationship generally showed a decrease in marital satisfaction.
- f) Improvement in marital satisfaction after the birth of the first child was correlated with viewing pregnancy as a negative experience due to concerns over appearance, depression, fatigue, and being uncomfortable.
- g) Successive parenthood (multipara) appears to increase the couples's marital dissatisfaction.

In conclusion, the Feldman studies (Feldman, 1971; Rollins and Feldman, 1970) articulated that parenthood does indeed have a pervasive influence on the marriage, an effect that appears during pregnancy and continues until the children leave the home. Furthermore, because changes in marital satisfaction were empiricized throughout different phases of the family cycle, Feldman (1971) offers support for role theory over trait theory hypotheses.

Building upon Feldman's (1971) work, Robert Ryder (1973) sought to improve the previous research by investigating and comparing changes in marital satisfaction for first-time parents with a control group of couples who did not have children. Two variables were measured for each spouse, one being a general score based on traditional "marriage satisfaction" items from Locke and Wallace (1959). Since this scale was scored in the negative direction, Ryder referred to it as the Marriage Dissatisfaction (MD) score. The other variable was also obtained from questionnaire items, but referred only to one specific complaint about marriage, that being whether or not the respondent felt that their spouse paid enough attention to them or was adequately loving. This variable was measured by a 32-item scale which Ryder entitled the Lovesickness (LS) Scale. The results from Ryder's pretest and posttest control group design were mixed. No clear decline in marital satisfaction due to the birth of a child was evidenced. In fact, the only significant correlate of

having a child was that the new mothers reported more "lovesickness" (a feeling that their husbands did not pay enough attention to them) after the birth of their baby.

While this effect, plus Feldman's results, supports the consequences researched in the crisis series (Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1965; LeMasters, 1957) it is important to note that neither Ryder nor Feldman labeled the consequences as crises. Instead, by looking at the results in terms of role transitions, questions such as what type of marriage relationship does the couple have, or how does the spouse perceive the amount of attention and aid offered, began to be asked. These types of questions remained open to empirical investigation.

Obtaining research data that concurred with Ryder's (1973) results, Miller and Sollie (1980) found that new mothers were more likely than new fathers to view their marriages as changing in a negative way after the birth of their first child. In a longitudinal study designed to measure personal well-being, personal stress, and marital stress of couples at three points in time--at six months pregnant, one month postpartum, and eight months postpartum - these investigators pointed out that the sometimes overwhelming demands of new parenthood usually result in some degree of personal and marital stress. Furthermore, this stress appears to build from the one month to eight months postpartum period, suggesting some support for the idea of a baby honeymoon (Hobbs, 1963). Despite these

findings, Miller and Sollie (1980) view these stresses as "normal stresses" encountered as part of a developmental event, and recommend that future attentions focus on the stress via coping strategies such as redefining role expectations and subsequent role renegotiations.

Both of the final two studies to be examined in the marital satisfaction/family development research series refined and built upon the ideas published by Ryder (1973) and Miller and Sollie (1980). In a partial replication of the Ryder Study, Waldron and Routh (1981) collected data from 46 married couples at two points in time - during the wife's third trimester of pregnancy and then again six to eight weeks after the baby's birth. Like Ryder, the Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke and Wallace, 1959) was used to obtain a measure of overall marital satisfaction as reported by each spouse. However, to extend the Ryder study, Waldron and Routh also had couples complete the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1975; Bem, Martyna, and Watson, 1973). This scale was added so that the investigators might determine if a decrease in marital satisfaction would vary according to the sex-role characteristics of the spouses. Essentially, Ryder's (1973) results were again replicated in that wives' ratings of their marital adjustment decreased significantly after the birth of their first child while the husbands' changes from pretest to posttest were nonsignificant. Contrary to the researchers' expectations, there were no significant correlations between any of the sex-role characteristics and marital adjustment scores.

Lastly, extracting from the concept of the "normal stresses" (Miller and Sollie, 1930) of new parenthood, Weinberg and Richardson (1981) designed a study to assess the dimensions of early parental stress, and to determine differences in the importance of these dimensions to individuals or couples who have diverse life circumstances and characteristics. Four dimensions of stress were identified during the development and analysis of the researcher's questionnaire, including child versus self-welfare, major versus minor child problems, restriction of self and other adult activities, and immediate versus long-range problem experiences. Of particular interest, however, for the family development researchers are the different weights of importance attributed to the dimensions according to varying demographic characteristics. Specifically, fathers were more stressed by major child problems than were mothers, working mothers and parents with more than one child gave greater weight to immediate rather than long range problems, and restriction of self was of greater concern to working parents than non-working parents. Correlation of the dimension weights indicated that spouses do not share any common perceptions of stress except on the dimension of restriction of self and other adult activities. Perhaps these results indicate the need for further delineation of demographic characteristics associated with the stress of parenthood transition.

Methodological and Conceptual Problems

While the studies falling into this theoretical approach have improved and expanded upon the previous set of research known as the crisis series, two criticisms of this approach must be enumerated. The first criticism again focuses on sampling procedures. While, on the whole, sampling sizes increased in numbers, the majority of studies still used only white, predominantly urban, middle-class to upper-class couples as subjects (Feldman, 1971; Miller and Sollie, 1980; Rollins and Feldman, 1970; Ryder, 1973; Weinberg and Richardson, 1981; Waldron and Routh, 1981). Generalizations to other sample populations must, therefore, be reserved at this time. Random sampling procedures would be beneficial to future research.

The second major criticism of this series of studies is conceptual in nature. On initial inspection, marital satisfaction measures appear to go beyond individualistic approaches or evaluations, and into the realm of couple issues, yet on closer inspection, this series of studies collected data through questionnaires tapping into the personal attitudes of husbands and wives, and not into marital reactions to or patterns of parenthood. Hence, while the theoretical importance of the delicate balance of couple role transitions through the phase of first-time parenthood gave impetus to better and more complex research, the research lens remained out of focus.

In summary, the marital satisfaction/family development approach grew out of an abundance of criticism to the parenthood-as-crisis concept. Seeking a broader conceptual basis for investigation, researchers began incorporating family development and role theory hypotheses into their thinking which eventually merged into viewing first-time parenthood as a developmental event in the family, and more specifically in the marital, life cycle. Using the notion that behavior, attitudes, or expectations must change as new roles evolve led researchers to seek measurement of change in the marital relationship as evidence. While change in degree of marital satisfaction has been illustrated for couples making the transition to parenthood, a more critical review of the dimensions of this change are necessary.

An Interactive Approach to the
Transition to Parenthood: A Life-Span Perspective

As illustrated, the first years of research on the transition to parenthood were exploratory years. The studies published were descriptive in nature, and therefore focused on recording and detailing the quality of life after the first birth. Emphasizing only this "status" or "condition" has been the major drawback to the transition to parenthood research carried out thus far. Perhaps these studies, however, have been the necessary first steps taken to bring the research into the 1980's. In retrospect, the renaming of the crisis of first-time parenthood to the

transition to parenthood laid the foundation for the next step, and that next step is to look at the process variables of first-time parenthood. In other words, since the previous set of descriptive studies have suggested that the arrival of children can have a negative impact on the marital relationship (a description of the condition), it is now pertinent to look at what variables are involved in creating this impact (what is the process). One must remember, at this point, that the purpose of looking at process variables implies more than merely reporting more descriptive data. By attending to process variables, the researcher should hope to create a model or framework of the transition process. Hence, one may now see that this decade's research problem can be the conceptualization of a model of interactions as mediated by the birth of the first child. This third and final research approach - the creation of a process-oriented or interactional model of the transition to parenthood - will now be examined for its current position in the literature, as well as for its promise for future research problems.

In outlining an interactional approach for studying the transition to parenthood, it becomes evident that the birth of a couple's first child is just one facet of a very complex process "which involves changing identity, role behaviors, and communication patterns among three generations of a family" (Cowan, Cowan, Coie, and Coie, 1978). Discovering what these changes in role demands and

family interaction patterns are, and determining how these changes occur, are the goals of the social interaction research approach.

In order to recognize these goals, researchers must make two basic decisions. First, they must decide what questions need to be asked. Their second problem then becomes choosing what variables can be operationalized to best answer the questions. Once these decisions are tackled, researchers are one step closer to this decade's research problem of creating a model of interactions as mediated by the birth of the first child.

Several researchers have begun to ask questions and examine variables which could be used in creating an interactional model of the transition to parenthood. In general, the first questions posed were derived from two distinctively different frameworks, each of which is based on a life-span perspective. These two frameworks of the life-span perspective are (1) the stage-theory approach, and (2) the life-events approach. Before outlining questions from each approach, it is pertinent to first describe the basic assumptions of each of these conceptual frameworks.

The stage-theory approach. The stage-theory approach has been applied to adulthood by theorists such as Freud, Jung, Erikson, and Piaget. It has a long history and is frequently used (Baltes, 1979). More recently theorists such as Gould (1978), Guttman, (1977), Levinson (1978), and Loevinger (1976) have expanded its use.

The stage-theory approach has also been applied to the family life cycle, with the stage boundaries being based on such criteria as the age of the oldest child or the duration of a marriage (Aldous, 1978; Duvall, 1977; Glick, 1977). Whatever criteria are chosen for the stage boundaries, however, each separate stage represents a "particular configuration of positions and roles"; [hence,] "shifts from one stage to the next involve clear-cut, definite changes in positions and roles within the family structure" (Alpert, 1981, p. 25). Finally, it must be noted that associated with each stage are certain developmental tasks. In the transition to parenthood stage these tasks would include major challenges such as the assumption of the roles of mother or father, and the integration of these newly acquired roles with older, yet still ongoing, marital, sexual, and occupational roles.

Clearly, the developmental stage-theory approach to the transition to parenthood has distinct advantages in that it enables researchers to identify regularities and rhythms of adult life during this phase. Furthermore, this approach naturally emphasizes that there is some continuity in development in relation to role patterns and age-graded influences. Despite these advantages, definite drawbacks of this approach have also been identified. Critics have challenged the basic assumptions of the stage-theory approach by arguing that family development does not necessarily occur in an "orderly, unidirectional, and

irreversible sequence which is age-related and growth-oriented" (Alpert, 1931, p. 26). Secondly, critics note the inability of the stage-theory approach to account for non-normative life events in the context of particular stages. For example, the stage-theory approach would not encompass the impact that the birth of a child with multiple defects might have on a couple making the transition to parenthood. Lastly, critics argue that the stage-theory approach ignores differences in family histories, social contexts, coping resources, and the impact that these differences may have on family development.

The life-events approach. Critics of the stage-theory approach to development usually conceptualize change in adulthood from a life-events perspective (Dohrenwend, 1961; Looft, 1973; Reese and Overton, 1970). As a "mechanistic metamodel", the life-events approach focuses on antecedent-consequent relations rather than on "organic structure" as in developmental stage models (Richardson, 1981, p. 16). The antecedents are the actual events occurring in one's life, while the consequent responses are one's reactions to the events whether adaptive or maladaptive. Affecting this action-reaction relationship are antecedent factors (or aspects of the event which could vary the impact such as the timing or sequencing of the event) and mediating factors (or the biological, psychological, and contextual factors which may include hormonal, personality, and economic factors respectively). In addition, this model

assumes change to be both continuous and relative, rather than discontinuous and universal; hence, the meaning of a particular life event must always be couched in the context of other events occurring during one's life-span.

While proponents of the life-events approach tout the flexibility and lack of assumptions this model has for interpreting the complexity of adult development, two disadvantages have been noted. First, while it is true that the life events model can deal easily with non-normative events, such as the birth of a handicapped child, its emphasis on specific events does not lend itself toward creating an understanding of the generalities of the developmental process. Second, the model easily lends itself to a focus on stress and adaptation, but in doing so may not permit the identification of other relevant processes (Alpert, 1981; Richardson, 1981).

The questions. As previously stated, the questions asked by social interactionists who are interested in the transition to parenthood vary according to which school of thought the researchers use as a frame of reference. Since "change" is a concept expected and studied by both the stage-theorists and the life-events theorists, it can be used to illustrate some of the differences between the two approaches.

In the stage-theory approach to parenthood, the following questions might be asked:

- a) How does the birth of a child affect the marital relationship in terms of change in affect, changes in role structure, or changes in sexual interaction?
- b) How does the couple reorganize from dyad to triad, and what changes make this reorganization stressful and/or successful?
- c) How do attitude variables such as beliefs, values, or social norms affect the transitions, and do changes in these attitude variables occur?

In the life-events approach, a different set of questions regarding change would be asked. These questions could include the following:

- a) How does the timing of a pregnancy affect a couple's ability to cope with the changes required by a first birth in the family?
- b) What are the differing effects that education, SES, age, or ethnicity have on couples making the transition to parenthood?

- c) How does a couple's social network affect their development as a newly formed unit? Is the network an added stress or does it provide alternative coping resources?

These sets of questions illustrate the major differences between the two approaches. First, the two approaches differ with respect to the locus of change. According to stage-theorists, the stimulus for change is primarily internal and a function of the parental experiences associated with this stage. Certain developmental tasks involving learning and readjustments with respect to marital, and other familial and occupational commitments must be dealt with. In contrast, life-events theorists view change as a differential response to alterations in the environment due to the pregnancy/birth event, as well as a myriad of other important factors such as family ties, demographic factors, and individual/couple resources.

In summary, both approaches to the study of the transition to parenthood have advantages and disadvantages. The stage-theory approach enables the researcher to outline age-graded (ontogenetic) factors which will influence the experience for the majority of first-time parents, while the life-events approach ideally allows the researcher to review history-graded (evolutional) influences and non-normative effects (Alpert, 1981). It has been suggested by several

theorists (Hill and Mattesich, 1979; Hultsch and Plemons, 1979; Levinson, 1980) that the two approaches can be combined to create an integrated framework from which to study the family life cycle. It is suggested that this integrated framework can also be used to study the transition to parenthood

The Life-Span Perspective: Developing a Framework

Within the past five years, the research being published on the transition to parenthood has illustrated a beginning blending of the stage-theory and life-events approaches. Some of the emerging theories include

- a) Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of human development in which persons function within a complex set of micro-systems (e.g., family roles), which in turn interact with other microsystems (e.g. society/cultural roles);
- b) Lerner and Spanier's (1978) emphasis on a transactional model of development in which the "dynamic-interactional child-family interface" (p. 343) is studied in the context of its interdependence with time; and

- c) LaRossa and LaRossa's (1981) social interaction approach in which social patterns, processes, roles, and sociohistorical linkages are studied across time from pregnancy to post-partum.

While these proposed theories are only three of several emerging models for studying the development of parenthood, they illustrate how the blending of the previously used theories incorporates the study of role perspective in which antecedent and mediating factors such as timing, sex, education, social networks, and perceptions can actively influence the transition process. Furthermore, these theories all emphasize the factor of change across time; hence, proponents of these theories view the transition process from a life-span perspective (Baltes and Schaie, 1973).

Role Accumulation Theory

When the word "career" is used, the majority of people automatically think of their job situation - where they began and where they are going in their work setting. The element of change (in job status) across time (as experience is gained) is an expected part of the definition of career in an occupational sense. Yet the word career, if used more broadly, can also lend meaning to the transitions occurring in all individuals' lives as they mature and develop, or as their roles change across time.

Certain roles are self-evident. When an infant is born the role of a child as son or daughter is instantly assumed. Similarly assumed is the sex role as male or female. With time, social roles such as leader or follower, and occupational roles such as student or worker develop and gain importance as the child matures into adulthood. Finally, with adulthood, come the marital roles of husband or wife, and possibly the parental roles of father or mother. These roles from childhood to adulthood are the major roles affecting most lives. Naturally there is a long list of minor roles that individuals may also assume during their life-span, but a look at only the major roles and their sequence in life illustrates that individuals must build on their roles rather than trade one role for another. In other words, when children marry and become parents, they cannot relinquish their roles as child of their parents any more than they trade being the marital partner of their spouse. Instead they add on new roles while they maintain the old roles. What begins to be apparent is that somehow the accumulation of these roles must be managed.

Interactive Structures

For clarity, the interactive structures affecting the parental role transition process are broken into three major categories: (1) Couple Issues and other Affiliative Relationships, (2) Current Social Conditions and other Demographic Factors, and (3) Attitudes, Perceptions, and

Beliefs. The most recent research on the transition to parenthood will now be reviewed under these categories.

Couple issues and other affiliative relationships.

Before children are born, most couples develop accepted styles of relating to one another. The styles are based on their expectations for the relationship, and have been formed by either overt or covert negotiating. Styles of communication, affection, and power are considered to be the basic interactive structures inherent in couple relationships (Aldous, 1978); therefore, couple issues will be explored in the context of these styles.

The importance of open communication between spouses experiencing the transition to parenthood is stressed in almost all of the literature cited, yet surprisingly only a few of the studies have incorporated a couple's communication style as a variable of study in the research. Two studies by Rausch and colleagues (1970, 1974) focused directly on the couple's communication process in the shift to parenthood. Findings included an increased use of "I" words as marriages progressed from newlywed to parenthood stages, and between prenatal and postnatal research sessions changes included an increase in cognitive communication styles (e.g., suggestions, rational arguments), a decrease in rejecting responses, an increase in coercive communication (e.g., guilt induction, power plays) and a decrease in the use of appeals. Feldman (1974)

likewise noted an increase in what he termed "instrumental conversation" after the birth of the first child, although simultaneously noting an overall decline in the actual amount of time that spouses spent talking to one another in an average day. Furthermore, spouses reported an increased inability to express their feelings to their mates during the transition to parenthood period (Meyerowitz and Feldman, 1966).

LaRossa and LaRossa's (1981) sociological research on the transition to parenthood emphasizes the interdependence of the communication, affection, and power structures of a couple's relationship. By conducting conjoint interviews to collect their data, the LaRossa's were able to focus on how a couple's communication style affects the management of conflict and power issues. Communication styles included the use of appeals, justifications, or excuses (Stokes and Hewitt, 1976). The use of these types of verbal aligning actions during the shift to parenthood are inherent in the negotiations required by a couple as they assume new parental roles while trying to maintain older roles, for they aid the couple in clearing up misunderstandings and conflicts of interest which undoubtedly occur when a new baby arrives on the scene. Backett (1982) also notes how differences in communication patterns affect the negotiation of parental behavior in couples.

Further evidence of the interdependence of the communication, affection, and power structures is also seen in two studies published by Cowan, Cowan, Coie, and Coie (1978) and Gladieux (1973) respectively. The Cowan et al study states that communication is a central dimension of a couple's relationship, and that both overt and covert patterns of communication evolve so that a couple can "exchange information, make decisions, share tasks, convey feelings, solve problems, and resolve conflicts" (p. 299). Gladieux (1978) similarly combines communication, affection, and power, noting that satisfaction during pregnancy was related more to a couple's "conveyance of affection, style of communication, [and] patterns of dominance and dependency" (p. 290) than to shared attitudes and opinions on child bearing and parenthood.

While the interdependence of these three structures is evident, some interesting points concerned only with affection and power issues should be discussed. For example, in considering affection styles, or the "coupleness" of the couple, it has been noted that marital satisfaction is likely to increase for couples who displayed more individuality or differentiation in their relationship, while couples in companionate marriages have a more difficult time with the transitional tasks required of new parenthood (Feldman, 1974). More recently, researchers are suggesting that transitional dysfunction based on the couple's relationship style is more complicated than the

Feldman finding, and the disequilibrium could be influenced by other life style factors such as division of labor issues and characteristics of the new infant (Cowan, Cowan, Coie, and Coie, 1978). That other factors are involved is important to note since one research project noted that most couples become more differentiated when they become parents independent of their level of functioning (Entwisle and Doering, 1931). As LaRossa and LaRossa (1931) note, "it would seem that what is true in general would be true for the transition to parenthood: families which strike a balance between separateness and connectedness would best be able to absorb a newborn child" (p. 149).

Closely aligned with measures of "coupleness" are subjective measures of affection and fulfillment. Gladieux's (1978) research on the pregnancy experience noted that while physical dependency of the pregnant women to her spouse increased, control and autonomy were maintained in other areas allowing for a continuance of affective sharing and mutual inclusion. Conversely, for women who saw the increased dependency as a threat, ratings of couple affection decreased. New parents, in general, however showed no significant differences from either childless or stable, full-house parents in affection-fulfillment measures (Menaghan, 1933).

Power issues are perhaps the most interesting of all the couple issues explored thus far. Power, "the ability to affect social life" (Olsen, 1963, p. 192), is one

of the most important variables in the marital system, for the power structure is the control center of the relationship. Two distinctions are worth noting with regard to power. The first distinction is between legitimate and illegitimate power (LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981). Legitimate power, or authority, is used with the consent of those controlled. Illegitimate power is used without their consent. The second distinction is between orchestration and implementation power:

spouses who have "orchestration" power have, in fact, the power to make only the important and infrequent decisions that do not infringe upon their time but that determine the family lifestyle and the major characteristics and features of their family. They also have the power to relegate unimportant and time-consuming decisions to their spouses who can thus, derive a "feeling of power" by implementing those decisions within the limitations set by crucial and persuasive decisions made by the powerful spouse.
(Safilios-Rothschild, 1976, p. 359)

From the above descriptions, one can see that the allocation of power within a marriage involves two important elements: (1) decision-making and (2) division of labor. Using these two variables, researchers involved with studying the transition to parenthood have noted that the power structure of most marriages does change with the birth of the first child (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Cowan, Cowan, Coie, and Coie, 1978; Hoffman, 1978; Hoffman and Manis, 1978; LaRossa, 1977; LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981; Meyerowitz and Feldman, 1966; Quarm, 1977). Typically, the change involves the traditionalization of the marriage; that is,

marital patterns shift toward patriarchal relationships with sex roles based upon "men's work" and "women's work" (LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981; Lamb, 1978).

The division of labor in a household is one area researchers have examined in their study of the transition to parenthood. Usually subjects are asked to indicate who completes each of several household tasks which are outlined on a list (Blood, and Wolfe, 1960), or subjects are asked to respond to questions regarding whether their spouses help with housework and how often this help is offered (Hoffman, 1973; Hoffman and Manis, 1973). The findings from these studies indicate the the first child has a dramatic effect on the division of labor in a household, with mothers reporting less help from their husbands than non-mothers (Hoffman, 1973; Hoffman and Manis, 1973). Furthermore, this effect was found even when the mother returned to full-time work; hence the inequities were sustained despite the wife's employment status (Berk and Berk, 1979; Hoffman, 1978, Hoffman and Manis, 1973). LaRossa and LaRossa (1981) citing drawbacks in the tendency for family researchers to again study only outcomes rather than processes, look at the division of labor as a power issue that is "interactive, emergent, and processual" (p. 98). Their research attempts to explain why new parents tend to drift toward a traditional division of labor by examining equity versus equality within the context of time and the value of time. The LaRossas (1981) contend that new parents do not seek

task equality in their negotiations over baby care, rather they seek equity or a fair arrangement which allows both husband and wife the time to pursue opportunities outside of childcare. Furthermore, it is contended that several factors may create the trend toward the traditional gender roles. These factors may include the physiological (hormonal) forces at work from pregnancy (Rossi, 1977), internalized sex roles from childhood socialization, and cultural expectations. The LaRossa's (1981) suggest that the transitional period, wherein these factors come to play, is a critical time in which couples initiate systemic levels of changes in their marriage toward traditionalization in order to cope with the pressures of new parenthood and their new scarcity of time. It is interesting to note, at this point, that an operationalization of the "equity" concept found no significant differences in measurements obtained from new parents versus childless couples (Menaghan, 1983).

Decision-making is the second major variable used to study power allocation in a marriage. Complementary to the division of labor issue, research indicates that the wife's decision-making role decreases with the birth of the first child and decreases more with second and third children (Hoffman, 1977). In general, this result has been determined by asking each member of a couple questions concerning who is in charge, or who makes most of the decisions for the household. Seeking to go further than reliance on outcomes, both Hoffman (1978) and LaRossa (1977)

noted that factors such as the mother's loss of employment and her subsequent financial loss served to decrease her power in decision-making, especially in areas regarding financial purchases or entertainment costs. Menaghan (1933) also suggests that wives' leaving of employment may be associated with declining equity.

To complete the literature survey dealing with couple issues, it is pertinent to view the couple in a large social context which includes family and friends.

Researchers interested in what happens to a couple's affiliative relationships when a first child is born have found the following results:

- a) The first child tends to move the husband and wife into separate friendship spheres; that is, the women have their friends while the men have theirs (Hoffman, 1978; Hoffman and Manis, 1973),
- b) First-time parenthood increases the contact that couples have with their own parents (Hill, 1970; Hoffman and Manis, 1978; Lamb, 1978),
- c) Supportive networks of family and friends who are themselves parents become increasingly important (Gladieux, 1973), and

- d) Women with modern sex role conceptions had more distant family connections, fewer friends, and higher dissatisfaction with entire pregnancy experience (Gladieux, 1978).

In conclusion, it appears that the relationship changes which occur will have an impact on the system in a three-generational perspective (Cowan, Cowan, Coie, and Coie, 1978), for just as the couple's changing patterns of friendships and extended family relationships force them to adopt new roles and identities, so will their own parents be taking on new roles as grandparents. Certainly these changes will create new patterns of communication, affection, and power between the new parents, the grandparents, and the baby.

Current social conditions and demographics.

Fact #1: Today over 40% of marriages end in divorce (Entwisle and Doering, 1981).

Fact #2: Within the past 15 years millions of women entered into paid employment (Fein, 1978)

Fact #3: In recent years, American courts have made decisions which impact upon the changing equality between men and women (Fein, 1978).

These facts illustrate the rapidly changing environment into which couples marry and enter into parenthood. Yet despite the uncertainties of this era, contemporary couples still value the family (Douvan, 1979) and claim emotional benefits as the primary reason for having children (Fawcett, 1978). Surprisingly, the birth experience has only recently obtained the interest of social scientists, but today it has become clearer that the research on emergent families can also mirror important, if rapid, changes in society such as "women's reduced fertility, women's increased labor-force participation, the blurring of sex roles, and the increased salience of the quality of life as a goal in itself" (Entwistle and Doering, 1981, p. 235).

Many of the changes mirrored by the birth experience can be seen by examining the current demographic statistics collected on today's first-time parents. Of particular interest are the variables of age, education, and employment status. Other related social class factors will also be discussed. Most data reported on these variables will be drawn from Hoffman's (1978) national survey data collected for the Value of Children (VOC) project. In this

survey, 11,569 women and a 45% sample of their husbands were interviewed to obtain data regarding the impact of the first birth on women's roles and the marital relationship. Other research will be reported, as available, on each variable of interest.

Age, education, and employment status. On any given day, an observer can easily note that the number of pregnant women out and about appears to be increasing. The baby boomers of the 1950s are beginning their own families. What is interesting to observe, however, is that these women and their spouses are not necessarily in their early twenties, but rather look thirtyish. This trend has been noted in the news, but research has also documented a pattern of women marrying later, having their first child later, and pursuing more education (Hoffman, 1978). The interconnectedness of age, education, and employment status is also illustrated in other research. For example, much evidence has been accumulated to show that employment rates for women decrease with the birth of the first child (Hoffman and Nye, 1974). Similarly, education is often curtailed by the advent of children in a family, although there has been reported a small gain in the percentage of mothers who return to school (Hoffman, 1978). Age, however, appears to be a strong mediating variable in the generalizability of these results. The importance of age is seen in McLaughlin and Micklin's (1933) findings that the younger the woman at the time of her first birth, the less

the education she will obtain regardless of social class. Conversely, Hoffman (1978) states that "the more highly educated women marry later and have their first child later" (p. 349). That age and education affect employment and commitment to employment both before and after the first birth has also been noted (Hoffman, 1978). Specifically, the higher the level of education and the higher the occupational position of the wife, the greater the woman's commitment to continue paid employment (Hoffman, 1978).

The importance of the wife's employment status is further emphasized by LaRossa and LaRossa (1981) who claim that their data suggest that this variable is more important in qualifying the relationship between parenthood and family interactions than either age or length of years married.

Other related social class factors. Although education and employment status as related to age are the strongest indicators of social class (Menaghan, 1983) available in the transition to parenthood studies, today's availability of conception control methods is a trend worth exploring. That couples can now decide when to begin their families may have far-reaching ramifications in terms of marital satisfaction (Christenson, 1968) and integration of the child into the family unit (Miller, 1978). In earlier decades, there was also a strong association between socioeconomic status and conception control (Entwisle and Doering, 1981); however, this is an association which may be changing. In a recent longitudinal study using equal

numbers of lower- and middle-class respondents, no significant differences in conception control were noted in that almost all of the pregnancies were planned (Entwisle and Doering, 1981).

Using social class stratification as a basic parameter of their research design, Entwisle and Doering (1981) noted some other interesting results. First, the average behavior of new parents was approximately the same regardless of social class. Just as many lower-class as middle-class fathers were present during delivery, and just as many lower as middle-class women chose to breastfeed their infants. Second, on all measures of parental responsiveness, the two classes were equivalent. Both lower- and middle-class fathers were equally involved emotionally with their children. Third, social class differences were noted only with respect to parenting models. For example, in middle-class couples, previous baby care experience had a positive effect on parenting, and babies were not viewed as "mother's property." Yet in lower-class couples, previous baby experience was negatively related to the amount of parenting contributed by the father. In both classes, however, the majority of infant care was assumed by the mother.

To complete the discussion of the effect of current social conditions and demographic variables on the transition to parenthood, it is fair to note that if new parents seem to have a difficult time embracing their new

roles, it may be due to a lack of guidance and/or models on how to play the modern parent role. Men and women today are finding themselves in the midst of changing sex role conceptions--changes which have both benefits and costs (Gladieux, 1978). Yet concurrent with these ideological changes has been the gradual disappearance of the extended family. This loss of support forces husbands and wives to seek each other out for support and help during the first few weeks of new parenthood; hence, Fein (1978) suggests that research on parenting needs to focus more on the couple perspective of postnatal infant care, rather than just on the mother's perspective.

Attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. The final interactive structure influencing the success with which couples make the transition to parenthood involves measurements of attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about their new roles. These factors, while difficult to define, are very important mediating variables, for they determine the psychological environment of the emerging family system.

As would be expected, the many changes in lifestyle that accompany new parenthood also bring on changes in attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. Interestingly, however, the changes appear to be idiosyncratic rather than systematic. For example, Hoffman's (1978) data comparing first-time mothers with childless women illustrated that new mothers' attitudes shifted toward traditional marital

patterns. They also perceived an increase in marital closeness due to their new shared tasks of rearing a child. Lastly, in contrast to childless women, new mothers expressed the belief that the first child establishes adulthood. Childless spouses did not express these attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs regarding parenthood. The contradictions in these evaluations by first-time parents become evident when one considers other data reported. To summarize, previously it was noted that the first child dichotomizes men's and women's roles, brings about a loss of financial income generally due to the wife's loss of employment, separates the friendship spheres of the husband and wife, and tends to decrease the amount of time the husband devotes to household tasks (Hoffman and Manis, 1978). And yet, couples perceive children as bringing them closer together. Furthermore, the first child as an establisher of adulthood, increases the couple's responsibilities, restricts their freedom, and adds worries. Yet the new families do not evaluate this negatively. Rather they see children as bringing them satisfaction and fulfillment (Hoffman and Manis, 1978).

Cowan, Cowan, Coie, and Coie (1978) also noted changes in perceptions and beliefs in measurements taken during mid-pregnancy and again at six months postpartum. The data indicated that the transition period witnessed an increasing discrepancy between partners in their perception of mutual roles. During mid-pregnancy, there was a general agreement on task allocation and time allotment; however, at

postpartum, mothers perceived their share of baby care tasks to be greater than the husband perceived, while fathers perceived that they gave more time than the wives rated them as giving. In general, women perceived more changes in time than did the men, which seemed to be a significant source of conflict. Beliefs about parenthood and childcare also shifted toward more traditional ideas in the Cowan et al. (1978) study. Comparing the pregnancy and postpartum responses showed the new parents developing a more sympathetic identification with their own parents as they assumed parental roles themselves.

Similarly, discrepancies in perceptions on male and female parenting roles were noted in data derived from unmarried individuals (McIntire, Nass, and Battistone, 1974). The direction of the misperceptions was for the women to attribute less interest and involvement in early parenting tasks to their male peers than was expressed by the men themselves. This result, coupled with the previous studies reviewed, indicates that women may be placing themselves in a double-bind, for they may be cutting off a significant source for assistance when they incorrectly perceive males as wanting or needing the woman to become the traditional homemaker. Again, this situation may be due to a lack of modern role models. Nevertheless, perceptions of one's marital and parental roles are so important that one theory of marital satisfaction (Rollins and Galligan, 1973) is based upon the interplay between (1) the perceived

quality of role enactments by self and spouse, (2) the perceived consensus of role expectations, and (3) the perceived relative deprivation due to role enactment. According to this theory, the transition to parenthood creates discrepancies in these perceptions due to new role accumulation and role strain.

To complete this section, it is pertinent to explore whether or not parenthood education services can make a difference in attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs. The need for research in this area has been documented (Resnick, 1981), but program effectiveness data are scarce. In the few studies researching childbirth preparation influences, it has been reported that childbirth classes have improved the mother's birth experience by increasing her positive emotions toward the birth itself (Enkin, Smith, Dermer, and Emmett, 1972; Huttel, Mitchell, Fischer, and Meyer, 1972) as well as allowing the woman to have more positive responses to her child immediately following birth (Entwisle and Doering, 1981). Childbirth preparation also led men to fuller participation in the birth, and in some middle-class men, preparation had direct positive effects on fathering apart from the birth experience (Entwisle and Doering, 1981). Lastly, although preparation classes did not appear to foster integration of parental roles in the Entwisle and Doering (1981) project, it did appear to affect the social integration of the child into the family system. These reports call into question research indicating that

attendance at preparation classes does not help in the transition to parenthood (Parke and O'Leary, 1975; Wente and Crockenberg, 1976); however, these discrepancies may indicate the lack of most parenthood programs to deal with both prenatal and postnatal needs and adjustments.

In conclusion, it appears that preparation classes provide prospective parents with active control measures which allow them to handle the stress of birth. Perhaps further preparation allowing for active control of the stresses encountered during the first year of new parenthood could also reduce the stresses that couples encounter as they make new role transitions during this period.

Two Approaches to Creating a Life-Span Framework

With the completion of the literature review on the transition to parenthood, it is now necessary to describe two approaches which have been used to create life-span models of this critical period in adult development. These two approaches include (1) the use of descriptive interviews from a sociological point of view (Entwisle and Doering, 1981; LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981), and (2) the use of experimental designs for data analysis and instrument development (Menaghan, 1983; Steffensmeier, 1982). In each of the approaches both stage-theory ideas (role transitions) and life-events factors (social conditions, demographics, perceptions) are incorporated so that the transition period is understood as a process and not just as an outcome.

The first approach, the use of descriptive interviews, was used by two sets of researchers whose results have been emphasized within the context of the interactive structures (Entwisle and Doering, 1981; LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981). Briefly, their main source for data collection was through the use of scheduled interviews which were taped and later transcribed. In both research projects a short-term longitudinal design was employed so that couples were interviewed several times during the transition period. The LaRossa's (1981) interviewed on a postpartum schedule only, while Entwisle and Doering (1981) included both prenatal and postpartum interviews in their design. Entwisle and Doering (1981) also utilized a number of questions from well-known scales or tests, with all questions firmly embedded in the interview format.

The second approach, the use of experimental designs, has been used by Menaghan (1983) and Steffensmeier (1982). Menaghan's study was designed as a panel analysis of many family transitions, including the transition to parenthood. In her research on the impact that parental roles have on marriage, she measured variables of equity, affection-fulfillment, coping adequacy, non-family commitments, gender, family size, education, and income level. In short, Menaghan found little support for the hypothesis that transitions produce significant variations in the marital experience as measured by equity and affection-fulfillment.

Steffensmeier's (1982) study focused on the development of a 25-item instrument measuring three dimensions of the transition to parenthood. The dimensions were labeled Parental Responsibilities and Restrictions (PRR), Parental Gratifications (PG), and Marital Intimacy and Stability (MIS). The independent variables used to tap into these dimensions included the operationalization of anticipatory socialization, role clarity, perceived role conflict, sex, and educational level. One interesting result showed that females had a higher level of anticipatory socialization and role clarity than males, and that higher-educated persons had a lower level of role clarity than their lesser-educated counterparts. Furthermore, role clarity had a significant positive direct effect on the measure of Marital Intimacy and Stability.

Methodological Problems of the Social Interaction Research

While there is no doubt that the recent research published in this interest area is more sophisticated than previous research focused on the transition to parenthood, the social interaction research still suffers from some of the same methodological problems encountered in the "crisis" and "marital satisfaction" studies. Sampling has, in general, focused only on white middle-class couples expecting the birth of their first child. Furthermore, except for the Hoffman (1978) study and the Menaghan (1983) research, sample size has remained small (under 100

couples); hence, generalizations outside of the stated populations should be avoided.

Secondly, while the amount and content of the data collected has increased and become more complex, it has remained descriptive. As noted, much of the research in this area has been generated through interviews which can always threaten the validity of the research. Fortunately, the LaRossa's (1981) and Entwisle and Doering (1981) concerned themselves with issues of validity prior to conducting the interviews. Interviewers were trained and the interviews were planned and structured to reduce experimenter bias.

Lastly, attempts to operationalize the transitional effects of parenthood on the marital relationship have been elusive (Menaghan, 1933; Steffensmeier, 1932); hence, it appears necessary to re-evaluate the basic question concerned with how parental transition difficulties alter the marital experience. While common sense dictates some linkage between the advent of children and marital stability, tracing the process has remained inconclusive. Perhaps the time spans measured in the research have not been long enough to register the changes, or perhaps the wrong questions are being asked about the couple relationship. Further research will be essential to begin solving these dilemmas.

A Final Summary on the
Transition to Parenthood Research

The literature review presented spans a 30-year period of research on the transition to parenthood. Beginning with the parenthood-as-crisis series, the review focused on the theory and research relating the birth of the first child to adjustment problems. Building upon this area, marital satisfaction studies expanded this research to include global measures of marital adjustment with more specific adjustments related to the advent of the first child. This series of parenthood research introduced the concept of new parenthood as a normal role transition of adult life. Lastly, literature related to the interactions of parental roles with other important life factors was reviewed in the social interaction approach to the transition to parenthood. This final phase of research has begun to investigate how parents integrate their new roles with other ongoing life roles such as employment, marriage, education, home maintenance, and social activity. In other words, the transition to parenthood is beginning to be viewed within a larger and continually changing social context. This new context focuses today's research on the creation of a framework for studying this important developmental stage of adult life.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This research project was designed to be a descriptive ex post facto investigation of factors involved in adult development during one stage of the family life cycle; that stage being the transition to parenthood following the birth of a couple's first child. The factors explored were systematically investigated under four major social dimensions known as occupational, marital, parental and home maintenance (domestic) life roles. Interactions among these roles were examined for differences and/or similarities in the context of the wife's employment status. Assessment was based on couples' answers to both questionnaire and scale items posed in each of the four social dimensions mentioned above.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to detailing the methods and procedures used in this study. Information is presented on the (1) population and sample, (2) procedures, (3) instrumentation, (4) research hypotheses, (5) data analysis procedures, and (6) methodological limitations.

Population and Sample

Subjects in this study were obtained from the population of first-time parents in the city of Alexandria, the city of Arlington, and the county of Fairfax, Virginia. Subjects consisted of 150 white, middle-class married couples between the ages of 20 and 35 whose first child had reached an age of six to nine months. Hence a total of 300 subjects (150 husbands and 150 wives) were used in this research. Subjects were equally divided into three groups: (1) 50 couples where the wife remained at home as a full-time homemaker, (2) 50 couples where the wife returned to work part-time following the birth of the child, and (3) 50 couples where the wife returned to full-time employment following the child's birth. In each group, wives had maintained full employment prior to the child's birth, and in each group the spouses' combined total income yielded a minimum of \$20,000. The upper range of income included couples making \$50,000 a year. Only couples delivering a normal, single infant were asked to participate in the study. A normal infant was defined as appropriate for gestation age with no deformities, perinatal illness, birth injuries, or extended hospital stay.

Procedures

Sample Selection Procedures

Couples for this study were recruited from the population of first-time parents in the metropolitan Northern Virginia area. To obtain participants, the

principal investigator first contacted the administration of the three major hospitals in this area - the Alexandria Hospital, the Arlington Hospital, and the Fairfax Hospital - to obtain a listing of potential subjects who delivered during December, 1984, through March, 1985. These delivery dates were chosen to insure that the couples' infants had reached an age of six months whereby most wives would have made a decision regarding a postpartum return to work outside of the home. This request for information from the hospitals was unfortunately denied due to the hospitals' policies of patient privacy and restriction of records. As a back-up procedure, the researcher then contacted the Virginia Department of Health-Vital Records Division to request a listing of births recorded in the Northern Virginia area during the prescribed time period. This request for public birth records was also denied due to issues of privacy of information.

The procedure which proved successful for recruiting first-time parents was through listings of public birth announcements printed in local Northern Virginia newspapers. Copies of these listings were obtained by searching through back issues of the newspapers on file at local libraries. Papers used included the Alexandria Journal, the Alexandria Gazette, and the Fairfax Journal. These papers announced births occurring at all three of the major hospitals originally contacted for information. Over 500 names were recruited from these listings.

A second procedure used to obtain subjects was through contact with the Alexandria - Lake Ridge Pediatric Center. This center is a group practice of three pediatricians with two offices to serve Northern Virginia families. The practice offered to help this researcher contact subjects by first talking to potential subjects with first-borns, and then providing the investigator with names and numbers of couples willing to participate. Only five of the research couples were obtained from this procedure. The remainder of the sample was obtained through the printed birth announcements.

From the listing of potential participants, only couples who delivered from December, 1984, through March, 1985, were considered for contact. Each couple in this sample was then called by the principal investigator during the months of July and August, 1985, to request participation in the study. A brief description of the study's purpose, subject selection requirements, time commitment requested of participants, and questionnaire return procedures were outlined for the potential subjects. Both partners were required to agree to participate in the study for inclusion in the research project. For couples who asked for extra time to make a decision, the investigator arranged to make a follow-up call at a pre-arranged time.

Couples agreeing to participate were assigned to one of three employment groups based upon information provided regarding the wife's occupational status. The investigator continued to make calls from the potential subject listing until each group contained a minimum of 50 couples. A total of 150 couples was, therefore, recruited for the overall study with 50 participating couples in each of the three employment classification groups.

Data Collection Procedures

Once verbal consent to participate was obtained by couples meeting the eligibility requirements for subject selection, the researcher mailed a questionnaire package to the couple which included two envelopes coded for husbands and wives. Each envelope contained a consent form and a copy of the questionnaire with instructions. The envelopes were self-addressed to the researcher and were pre-posted so that once completed the subjects could drop the questionnaires in the mail. Two to four weeks following distribution of the questionnaire, follow-up phone calls were used to contact nonrespondents. A third phone call was made if the second contact did not elicit a response. Only those questionnaires completed in entirety were used in the research analysis. Completion of the questionnaire took respondents approximately 20-45 minutes. This time estimate

was derived by administering the questionnaire to a small sample of couples with infants in order to receive feedback on the questionnaire format, prior to its distribution for research purposes.

Instrumentation

For this project, all instruments and descriptive questions were formatted in one questionnaire booklet divided into five sections. These sections included background information, occupational information, marital information, family information, and personal information (see Appendix C). The personal information section of the questionnaire included statements designed to tap into parental, marital, occupational, and home maintenance or domestic life role experiences. This questionnaire was professionally printed using recommendations described by Dillman (1978) in order to insure maximum response rate from the research subjects. Along with the descriptive questions to be reviewed in this section, the following instruments were utilized: The Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 1981), the Hobbs Crisis Index (Hobbs, 1965), the Gratification Checklist (Russell, 1974), and the Life Role Salience Scales (Amatea, Cross, Clark, and Bobby, 1986). Descriptive questionnaire items are surveyed first. Following will be a review of the other instruments.

Background Information Questions

These questions were designed to obtain information regarding sex, age, race, marital status, educational level, and socioeconomic status of participating subjects. This case material was requested to insure that subjects' responses could be used in this research, as well as to provide information deemed to be important in further data analyses.

Occupational Information Questions

These questions were designed to obtain information on the occupational status of both the husbands and wives involved in the study. This information was used to determine in which of the three employment classification groups the subjects' responses belong. Also, this information insured that the wives were employed prior to the first child's birth

Marital Information Questions

These questions specified the current marital status of the couples and the length of the present marital relationship. To determine if the birth of the first child had affected the marital satisfaction of either spouse, two questions were included in this section asking subjects to rate the relationship before and after the birth. These two rating scales were adapted from the Satisfaction Change

Scale (Schlein, Guerney, and Stover, 1971 - see Guerney, 1977). Internal reliability tests have not been deemed appropriate for such a simple measure since the retesting interval would need to be so brief; however, evidence of concurrent validity has been shown through correlating this scale with the Relationship Change Scale in a study using 96 subjects (Schlein, 1971). The correlation ranged from .43 to .49, $p < .001$.

Family Information Questions

Questions regarding family size and family planning were posed in the first part of this section of the questionnaire. Also included were two questions requesting subjects to ascribe percentage of time devoted "ideally" and "in reality" to childcare activities. These questions were designed to probe discrepancies in spouses' perceptions of their beliefs about the traditional division of sex roles involved in childcare management.

Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)

The Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) is a 48-item Likert-type attitudinal scale developed for the purpose of assessing marital satisfaction at any given point in time. Originally entitled the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (Snyder, 1979), the 73-item instrument was administered to a total of 369 subjects. Items had very high discrimination, and the instrument proved to be of sufficient reliability

and of high internal consistency. The coefficient of stability was .76 (Frazier, 1976). Concurrent validity of the instrument was determined at .79 (Bowden, 1977) when the instrument was compared to the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke and Wallace, 1959). A discriminant validity coefficient of -.73 (Bowden, 1977) was obtained by correlating scores with the Marriage Problem Checklist (Roach, as cited in Bowden, 1977). Development of the shorter form known as the MSS has been based on this previous research. Coefficients of correlation for each item on the shorter form with the whole scale scores of the original scale range from .51 to .82 (Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 1981). Currently, research on an even briefer form is underway.

The MSS is scored by subjects' responses to each item in the following format: strongly agree, agree, neutral (undecided), disagree, strongly disagree. Items are phrased positively (favorably toward marriage) and negatively (unfavorably toward marriage) in approximately equal proportions. Scoring on each item ranges from one to five, with five indicating the most favorable attitude toward one's own marriage, and one the least favorable attitude.

Hobbs Crisis Index (HCI)

This instrument was devised in 1965 to measure the extent of crisis associated with the advent of the first child. The 23 items constructed for this objectively scored checklist were selected from LeMasters' (1957) study of

difficulties which new parents reported. Original assessment included three-degrees of "bothersomeness" (none, somewhat, very much) for each item. Weights were assigned so that an individual could score from 0 (no crisis) through 46 (severe crisis). The first use of the index relied on face validity; however, replication studies have suggested criterion-related validity based on correlations between checklist scores and marital adjustment (Hobbs and Cole, 1976). Reliability has also been based on replication studies yielding nearly identical results to the original study's use of the index (Beauchamp as cited in Jacoby, 1969; Hobbs, 1968; Hobbs and Cole, 1976; Russell, 1974; Uhlenberg, 1970). For use in this research study, one adaptation of the scale was made. A three degree spread of measurement does not allow for variation in subjects' responses, so this study has expanded the scale to five degrees of "bothersomeness" ranging from not at all to rarely, sometimes, often, and all the time.

Russell Gratification Checklist (RGC)

This instrument was fashioned after the Hobbs Crisis Index to determine what things new parents enjoyed about their newly acquired roles (Russell, 1974). The resulting 12-item checklist is limited to face validity which is a troublesome problem. The reliability computed by the split-half method was .93. As with the Crisis Index, this research has expanded the response options from three to five possible categories.

Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS)

This instrument is currently being developed for use in research on the occupational, marital, parental, and domestic (home maintenance) role expectations of men and women of varying ages and life stages. Based on a two-part model, this 48-item instrument assesses the reward value and the style of participation for each of the four life role expectations mentioned above. Eight separate scores are available: (1) the parental role reward value scale (PRV), (2) the parental role participation scale (PRP), (3) the marital role reward value scale (MRV), (4) the marital role participation scale (MRP), (5) the occupational role reward value scale (ORV), (6) the occupational role participation scale (ORP), (7) the home maintenance role reward value scale (HRV), and (8) the home maintenance role participation scale (HRP). Six items are used, some of which are reverse scored, to assess each of these eight dimensions.

Scoring of the LRSS can be done by machine or by hand. Eight separate scores are derived; there is no total score for the instrument. Score values for each item range from one to five. There are six items in each scale; hence, creating a range of scores from 6 to 30 for each scale. Items which are reverse scored must be noted so that if a respondent gave a "2" to the item, the score value assigned would be a "4".

As the LRSS was still in a developmental stage, norm tables for sex, age, and life stage were not currently available. Construct validity data were available only on college men and women (Amatea, Cross, Clark, and Bobby, 1986; Clark, 1985) and on career women aged 28-70 (Amatea, Cross, Clark, and Bobby, 1986). Scale reliabilities for each of the eight scales range from .72 to .85.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the format of the given questionnaire, the following hypotheses, written in the null form, were tested in this study:

Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)

1. There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS among new mothers working full-time, new mothers working part-time, or new mothers who are unemployed.
2. There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.
3. There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS between new mothers and fathers in couples where the wife works full-time.

4. There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS between new mothers and fathers in couples where the wife works part-time.

5. There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS between new mothers and fathers in couples where the wife is unemployed.

Hobbs Crisis Index (HCI)

1. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

2. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

3. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife works full-time.

4. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife works part-time.

5. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife is unemployed.

Russell Gratification Checklist (RGC)

1. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

2. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

3. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife works full-time.

4. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife works part-time.

5. There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife is unemployed.

Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS)

1. There are no significant differences in levels of occupational role salience as measured by scores obtained on the Occupational Role Reward Value Scale (ORV) of the LRSS among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

2. There are no significant differences in levels of parental role salience as measured by scores obtained on the Parental Role Reward Value Scale (PRV) of the LRSS among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

3. There are no significant differences in levels of marital role salience as measured by scores obtained on the Marital Role Reward Value Scale (MRV) of the LRSS among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

4. There are no significant differences in levels of domestic role salience as measured by scores obtained on the Home Maintenance Role Reward Value Scale (HRV) of the LRSS among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

5. There are no significant differences in levels of occupational role involvement as measured by scores obtained on the Occupational Role Participation Scale (ORP) of the LRSS among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

6. There are no significant differences in levels of parental role involvement as measured by scores obtained on the Parental Role Participation Scale (PRP) of the LRSS among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

7. There are no significant differences in levels of marital role involvement as measured by scores obtained on the Marital Role Participation Scale (MRP) of the LRSS among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

8. There are no significant differences in levels of domestic role involvement as measured by scores obtained on the Home Maintenance Role Participation Scale (HRP) of the LRSS among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

9. There are no significant differences in levels of occupational role salience as measured by scores obtained on the ORV Scale of the LRSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

10. There are no significant differences in levels of parental role salience as measured by scores obtained on the PRV Scale of the LRSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

11. There are no significant differences in levels of marital role salience as measured by scores obtained on the MRV Scale of the LRSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

12. There are no significant differences in levels of domestic role salience as measured by scores obtained on the HRV Scale of the LRSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

13. There are no significant differences in levels of occupational role involvement as measured by scores obtained on the ORP Scale of the LRSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

14. There are no significant differences in levels of parental role involvement as measured by scores obtained on the PRP Scale of the LRSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

15. There are no significant differences in levels of marital role involvement as measured by scores obtained on the MRP Scale of the LRSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

16. There are no significant differences in levels of domestic role involvement as measured by scores obtained on the HRP Scale of the LRSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

Descriptive Hypotheses

1. There are no significant differences between husbands' and wives' assignments of percentages to each of the childcare activities listed in the "ideal" situation versus the "reality" situation among couples in each of the three employment classifications.

2. There are no significant differences between ratings of the marital relationship prior to the baby's birth and ratings of the relationship after the baby's birth among women in each of the three employment classifications.

3. There are no significant differences between ratings of the marital relationship prior to the baby's birth and ratings of the relationship after the baby's birth among men in each of the three employment classifications.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected for this study were analyzed by several statistical procedures. First, a preliminary analysis of the background information determined average ages, level of education, and income levels for each of the three employment statuses used to classify men and women in this study. Since no significant differences were found among the groups with respect to age and education variables, the stated hypotheses needed no special analyses performed to account for differences in normal variables.

Marital Satisfaction Scale

The first two hypotheses were analyzed using analysis of variance. Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 were analyzed by computing a series of related sample t-tests.

Hobbs Crisis Index

Analysis of variance was computed for Hypotheses 1 and 2. Related sample t-tests were computed to test for differences in Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5.

Russell Gratification Checklist

The first two hypotheses in this category were tested by computing analysis of variance, while the remaining three hypotheses were analyzed via related sample t-tests.

Life Role Salience Scales

Sixteen hypotheses were generated with respect to the eight subscales of the LRSS. The first eight hypotheses relate to scores obtained by new mothers, while the last eight relate to scores obtained by new fathers. All 16 hypotheses were analyzed for differences by use of the one-way analysis of variance.

Descriptive Hypotheses

The three hypotheses in this category required the researcher to organize crossbreak tables, which log the marital rating scores (see Appendix A, Section III, C.1 and C.2) and the percentages assigned to the childcare task categories (see Appendix A, Section IV, C.1 and C.2) against each of the three employment classifications used in this study. Chi squares were then computed to determine if

differences existed among these categories for men and women in each of the three employment classifications. The chi square analysis, however, did not prove to be a useful statistic for any of the three hypotheses. One-third to one-half of the cells in each table had expected frequencies of less than five, which did not allow for meaningful interpretation of the chi square results. As an alternative method of analysis, percentages were computed to look for trends in the data. Furthermore, the final two hypotheses relating to the before birth and after birth marital satisfaction ratings were analyzed using the two-way analysis of variance.

Methodological Limitations

Several factors have limited the generalizability of this study's results. First is the sample employed. Subjects selected for this study were limited to white, middle-class couples who had recently had their first child. Findings must, therefore, be limited to this restricted sample since race and socioeconomic differences were not measured. Furthermore, couples in this study participated on a voluntary basis. It is likely that those couples willing to participate may have differed from the general population of new parents on several factors involved in their occupational and familial roles. For example, it is possible that couples willing to participate may have experienced less stress in assuming their new

parental roles, and thus were more willing to share their experiences, than were nonparticipants. Factors such as these may have biased the results of the study.

Second, is the method of collecting data. A mailed questionnaire was used. There are several limitations involved in this type of research. Foremost is the likelihood of mortality. While follow-up procedures were used to lessen the mortality effect, questions still remain as to differences between those couples who completed the questionnaire and those who did not. By using a questionnaire with open-ended questions, social desirability and/or misunderstandings have also become sources of error. Lastly, a consideration must be that the data were collected only once, and that much of the reporting was of a retrospective nature. Collecting the data only once limits the researcher to describing differences among the sample group at the time of measurement. It is not possible to describe changes in role satisfaction from pre- to postpartum, nor is it possible to determine if the first child's birth created any change in the observed measures. The retrospective nature of the study has introduced errors of memory and the possibility of contamination due to intervening events not accounted for in this study. Cause and effect analysis is, therefore, omitted from the results.

Finally, a major limitation of this study is its narrow focus on the transition to parenthood at one specific point in time. Relationships are in a constant state of flux and transitions of this type lend themselves well to longitudinal studies. Time and money considerations, however, have severely restricted the scope of this research project.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the husbands' and wives' occupational and familial role experiences following the birth of the couple's first child. The familial roles researched included parental, marital, and domestic roles. The occupational roles varied according to the wife's employment status at six to nine months postpartum. The three occupational groups examined were (1) couples in which both the husband and the wife maintained full-time employment; (2) couples in which the husband and was employed full-time while the wife reduced her employment hours to part-time; and (3) couples in which the husband was employed full-time while the wife chose unemployment following the baby's birth. In all groupings, the wife maintained full employment prior to the baby's arrival. The husbands' and wives' experiences in their familial and occupational roles were examined by analyzing their ratings of parental crisis, parental gratification, marital satisfaction, perceived ideal childcare task allocation, perceived real childcare task allocation, and

levels of role salience and role participation for parental, marital, domestic, and occupational roles. To accomplish the research, a mailed questionnaire incorporating specific demographic questions, the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Hobbs Crisis Index, the Russell Gratification Checklist, and the Life Role Salience Scales was collected from 150 participating first-time parents, with 50 couples in each of the three employment groupings. Analysis of variance, related sample t-tests, and cross-tabulation tables were used to analyze the collected data.

This chapter includes a description of the research sample, the results of the data analyses used to test the proposed hypotheses, and a summary of the results.

Description of the Sample

A total of 150 couples who were first-time parents participated in this study. These 150 couples were drawn from a sample of 193 couples originally contacted for potential participation in this research project. Of the 193 contacts made, 3 couples declined participation during the first contact made by telephone, 36 couples did not return the questionnaires to the researcher after follow-up phone contact, and 4 couples returned incomplete questionnaires. Those figures represent a total response rate of 78%. The resulting sample of 150 couples ($N=300$) was composed of 150 first-time fathers/males and 150 first-time mothers/females.

The results of the demographic information asked of all subjects within the mailed questionnaire revealed the average age for male subjects to be 30.65 years, and the average age for females to be 23.65 years (see Table 1). An analysis of variance performed on the variable age by both sex and employment classification indicated that there were no significant differences in age by employment group ($F=1.813$, $p=.165$), but that there were significant differences between males and females in terms of age ($F=25.178$, $p<.001$). No interactions between sex and employment classification by age were noted ($F=1.604$, $p=.203$).

TABLE 1
MEAN AGES IN YEARS OF MALE AND FEMALE
SUBJECTS BY EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION,
OBTAINED F VALUES, AND F PROBABILITIES FOR AGE
VARIABLE BY SEX AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

CHARACTERISTICS					
SEX	EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS				
	full-time	part-time	unempl.	total	
Male	30.42	31.06	30.46	30.65	
Female	29.40	28.78	27.76	28.65	
Total					
Sample	29.91	29.92	29.11	29.65	
ANOVA RESULTS					
			F	p	df
Main effects - Age					
Sex			9.601	<.001	3
Employment Classification			25.178	<.001	1
			1.813	.165	2
2 Way Interactions					
Age by Sex and Employment			1.604	.203	2

In terms of education, the average number of years of education completed for males was 16.53, while for females it was 15.77 (see Table 2). Analysis of variance again indicated significant differences in levels of education by sex ($F=8.195$, $p<.01$), but not by employment group ($F=.931$, $p=.395$). No interactions were noted between sex and employment classification for years of education completed by subjects ($F=.210$, $p=.811$). A further breakdown of the education variable showed that 71.3% of all subjects had completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

TABLE 2
MEAN YEARS OF EDUCATION FOR MALES AND FEMALES
BY EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION, OBTAINED F VALUES, AND F
PROBABILITIES FOR EDUCATION VARIABLE BY SEX AND EMPLOYMENT
STATUS

CHARACTERISTICS				
SEX	EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS			
	full-time	part-time	unempl	total
Male	16.18	16.58	16.82	16.53
Female	15.62	15.84	15.84	15.77
Total				
Sample	15.90	16.21	16.33	16.15
ANOVA RESULTS				
	F	p	df	
Main Effects - Education	3.353	.019	3	
Sex	8.195	.005	1	
Employment Classification	.931	.395	2	
2 Way Interactions				
Education by Sex and	.210	.811	2	
Employment				

The sample was primarily composed of individuals in their first marriage ($n=281$). Only 19 individuals (6.3%) of the total sample of 300 subjects reported that they were in a remarriage. The average length of the present marital relationship of the total sample was 5.43 years. These sample characteristics are presented in Table 3. All subjects were white. Religious affiliations were not tabulated.

TABLE 3
RELATIONSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

CHARACTERISTICS	N	YEARS	PERCENT
Average length of present marital relationship	300	5.43	100.0
Number of subjects in first marriage	281		93.7
Number of subjects in a remarriage	19		6.3

Since the employment classification of couples was a major variable of interest in this study, several of the demographic questions posed in the mailed survey pertained to occupational information. First, both members of the couple system worked full-time prior to the birth of their first child. Following the birth, and at the time of the data collection, couples were classified according to the wife's current employment status. Three employment

groupings were derived: (1) husband employed full-time, wife employed full-time; (2) husband employed full-time, wife employed part-time; and (3) husband employed full-time, wife unemployed. The occupational status of the participants at the time of data collection is reported in Table 4. The classifications noted were derived by using a variation of the occupational classifications developed by the U.S. Department of Labor (1965). Of the total sample, 64.7% held jobs classified as professional/managerial, 11.3% were in sales/clerical positions, 6.3% were in skilled occupations, and 2% held semi-skilled positions. Homemakers comprised 15.7% of the total sample. The mean income range reported for couples from all of these classifications was \$40,000 to \$45,000 per year.

TABLE 4
OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS
IN EACH EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION GROUP

OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION	N(%) TOTAL SAMPLE	N FULL-TIME		N PART-TIME		N UNEMPLOYED	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
Professional/ Managerial	194 (64.7)	38	36	48	30	39	3
Sales/Clerical	34 (11.3)	3	10	2	16	3	--
Skilled	19 (6.3)	9	-	-	3	7	--
Semi-skilled	6 (2.0)	-	4	-	1	1	--
Homemaker	47 (15.7)	-	-	-	-	-	47

CURRENT OCCUPATION
ON CAREER PATH

No	53	(17.7)	7	3	6	7	8	22
Yes	245	(81.7)	43	47	44	43	41	27
No response	2	(.6)	-	-	-	-	1	1

Since all couples worked full-time prior to the first child's birth, couples were questioned as to whether the birth affected either spouse's employment status, how the employment was affected, and whether both spouses needed to work. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the subjects responded that employment statuses were affected by the birth. Table 5 characterizes the subjects' perceptions of how the couples' employment situations were affected. There was an almost even split between couples feeling that both spouses needed to work (50.3%) versus those feeling this to be unnecessary (49.7%). Table 4 depicts the subjects' responses to whether or not their current occupation is on their planned career path. As indicated 81.7% of the subjects believed their current occupational position to be in line with their career plans, while 17.7% did not view their current positions in this light. Lastly, subjects were asked to report the number of hours per week devoted to their current occupations. The mean hours per week for the total sample was 54.45 hours. Table 6 illustrates the mean hours devoted per week by sex and by employment classification. Noteworthy is the non working mothers' mean of 149.61 hours per week devoted to the occupation classified as homemaker. An analysis of variance performed on this variable noted a significant interaction effect in the number of hours worked per week by employment group and by sex ($F=428.01$, $p<.001$). This interaction would

TABLE 5
 SUBJECT RESPONSES TO HOW THE FIRST
 BIRTH AFFECTED EMPLOYMENT STATUS

RESPONSE	N	PERCENT
<u>HOW EMPLOYMENT AFFECTED</u>		
- No change, both work full-time	80	26.7
- Both spouse work more hours	2	.7
- Both spouses work full-time, but fewer hours	2	.7
- Both spouses work full-time; wife assumed new position with less responsibility	6	2.0
- Both spouses work full-time, wife began full-time business in the home	8	2.7
- Both work full-time; wife wants to quit job	5	1.7
- Wife works only part-time	101	33.7
- Wife quit working	83	27.7
- Wife quit; wishes to return to part-time if possible	13	4.3
<u>MUST BOTH SPOUSES WORK</u>		
- No	151	50.3
- Yes	149	49.7

be expected since couples were categorized according to the wife's employment status as full-time, part-time, or non-working.

TABLE 6
MEAN HOURS PER WEEK DEVOTED TO OCCUPATION BY SEX
AND EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION, OBTAINED F VALUES, AND F
PROBABILITIES FOR HOURS PER WEEK VARIABLE BY SEX AND
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

CHARACTERISTICS				
SEX	EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS			
	full-time	part-time	unempl	total
Male	47.60	47.66	45.90	47.05
Female	44.30	18.26	149.61	62.60
Total Sample	45.95	32.96	89.31	54.45
ANOVA RESULTS				
		F	p	df
Main Effects - hours/week		237.05	<.001	3
Sex		99.91	<.001	1
Employment Classification		322.20	<.001	2
2 Way Interactions				
Hours/week by Sex and Employment Classification		428.01	<.001	2

Statistics pertaining to pregnancy and the subjects' children were also obtained. Eighty-five (57%) of the couples bore male children, while 65 (43%) bore females. At the time of data gathering, the following infant age categories applied: (1) six months - 52%, (2) seven months - 15.3%, (3) eight months - 29.3%, and (4) nine months - 3.3%. Sixty-two of the 300 subjects (20.7%)

reported on unplanned pregnancy, leaving 79.3% or 238 subjects reporting that the pregnancy was a planned event. The question pertaining to if the couple planned to have more children yielded the following frequencies: (1) no - 20 or 6.7% of total subjects, (2) yes - 258 (86%), and (3) unsure or missing data - 22 (7.3%). The range of how many more children were desired was 0 -4 children more, with 24 or 8% of subjects omitting a response. Table 7 categorizes this information.

TABLE 7
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES REPORTED
FOR INFANT SEX, AGE, AND PREGNANCY PLANNING

CHARACTERISTICS	N	PERCENT
<u>Infant Sex</u>		
Male	85	57.0
Female	65	43.0
<u>Infant Age</u>		
6 months	78	52.0
7 months	23	15.3
8 months	44	29.3
9 months	5	3.3
<u>Last Pregnancy Planned</u>		
No	62	20.7
Yes	238	79.3
<u>Plan to Have More Children</u>		
No	20	6.7
Yes	258	86.0
Unsure	21	7.0
No Response	1	.3
<u>Number of More Children Desired</u>		
None = 0	19	6.3
One = 1	145	48.3
Two = 2	76	25.3
Three = 3	30	10.0
Four = 4	6	2.0
No Response	24	8.0

In summary, the analyses of the demographic data derived from the subjects in this research indicated that males comprised one homogenous subset of the sample with regard to age, education, race, and employment status, while females comprised a second homogenous subset with reference to age, education, and race. The employment status of the females was purposely manipulated for further study of the hypotheses posed in this research.

Findings Relating to the Null Hypotheses

Thirty-four null hypotheses were postulated for this research study. Five hypotheses pertained to the Marital Satisfaction Scale, 5 pertained to the Hobbs Crisis Index, 5 pertained to the Russell Gratification Checklist, and 16 pertained to the eight subscales of the Life Role Salience Scales. The final three hypotheses were postulated to look at differences in how husbands and wives perceived childcare task responsibilities and task allocation, and to look at how the couples perceived their marital relationship both before and after the baby's birth. All hypotheses were examined for differences between the three employment groups of couples.

Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)

Hypothesis One: There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS among new mothers working full-time, new mothers working part-time, or new mothers who are unemployed.

To test this hypothesis, an analysis of variance was computed among the three employment groups using the total MSS scores derived for females in each of these groupings. Since an F-ratio of 1.22 was obtained ($p > .05$), this hypothesis was accepted. Marital satisfaction does not differ among new mothers in the three varying employment groups. Table 8 illustrates means, standard deviations, ranges, and appropriate F-values for these females.

Hypothesis Two: There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

This hypotheses was also tested using an analysis of variance. An F-ratio of 5.85, $p < .01$ was computed; hence, Hypothesis Two was rejected and it was concluded that there is a difference in marital satisfaction among fathers in these three employment groups. To determine which groups differed, a Tukey-B procedure was performed using a .05 level of significance. The Tukey-B value used for contrast with group means was 14.68 indicating that only males with fully-employed wives and males with part-time employed wives differed significantly on this measure. To test the power of the F-test in this analysis an eta value of 7.29 was computed indicating that only 7.29% of the variation in MSS scores was due to employment groupings for males. Power derived equaled .88. Table 8 illustrates means, standard deviations, ranges, and appropriate F-values for these males.

TABLE 8
ANOVA RESULTS FOR FEMALES AND MALES AMONG THREE
EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS ON THE MARITAL SATISFACTION SCALE,
THE HOBBS CRISIS INDEX, AND THE RUSSELL GRATIFICATION CHECKLIST

SCALE	SEX	EMPLOYMENT	N	MEAN	STD		RANGE	F
					DEV.			
NSS	FEMALE	Full-time	50	203.54	19.95		149-232	1.22
		Part-time	50	210.10	17.63		168-239	
		Unemployed	50	207.44	24.99		105-240	
	MALE	Full-time	50	197.04	28.53		125-239	5.85*
		Part-time	50	211.16	14.66		184-236	
		Unemployed	50	202.74	16.27		163-236	
HCI	FEMALE	Full-time	50	54.10	10.72		28-70	
		Part-time	50	54.86	10.42		27-71	.59
		Unemployed	50	52.54	11.45		32-73	
	MALE	Full-time	50	45.52	10.69		24-72	
		Part-time	50	43.86	10.16		30-75	.37
		Unemployed	50	44.16	10.22		24-63	
RGC	FEMALE	Full-time	50	49.13	6.93		31-60	
		Part-time	50	47.80	7.01		33-60	.63
		Unemployed	50	48.98	5.96		38-60	
	MALE	Full-time	50	45.70	8.91		21-60	
		Part-time	50	47.86	5.67		38-58	1.90
		Unemployed	50	45.20	6.77		30-60	

* $p < .01$

Hypothesis Three: There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores on the MSS between new mothers and fathers in couples where the wife works full-time.

This hypothesis was tested using the related sample t-test between the male and female mean scores on the MSS for couples with full-time working mothers. As shown in Table 9, the t-value of 18.22 was significant at the $p < .001$; therefore, Hypothesis Three was rejected. As indicated by the difference in mean scores, new mothers in this group perceived higher levels of marital satisfaction than did their counterpart males.

Hypothesis Four: There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS between new mothers and fathers in couples where the wife works part-time.

This hypothesis was rejected based on the computed t-value of 35.11 at $p < .001$ (see Table 9). Again females in this group reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than did the male spouses in the part-time employment group.

Hypothesis Five: There are no significant differences in marital satisfaction as measured by scores obtained on the MSS between new mothers and fathers in couples where the wife is unemployed.

Table 9 indicates the significant t-value of 23.03 at $p < .001$ for this related sample comparison. Thus Hypothesis Five has been rejected, and it is concluded that there is a difference in reported levels of marital satisfaction between new parents when the wife is

TABLE 9
RELATED SAMPLES t-TEST RESULTS BETWEEN
MALE AND FEMALE MEAN SCORES ON THE
MARITAL SATISFACTION SCALE, THE HOBBS CRISIS INDEX, AND THE
RUSSELL GRATIFICATION CHECKLIST FOR THREE
EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS										
SCALE	SEX	N	FULL-TIME		t	PART-TIME		UNEMPLOYED		t
			MEAN	SD		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	
MSS	FEMALE	50	203.54	43.70	13.22**	210.10	26.84	207.44	34.47	23.03
	MALE		90.96			76.84		85.38		
HCI	FEMALE	50	54.10	12.35	4.81**	54.86	11.94	52.54	9.99	5.80
	MALE		45.70			43.86		44.34		
RGC	FEMALE	50	49.18	9.08	2.71*	47.80	7.49	48.98	6.81	3.92
	MALE		45.70			47.86		45.20		

* $p < .01$

** $p < .001$

unemployed. The female mean of 207.44 compared to the male mean of 85.38 indicates that new mothers reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than did their spouses.

In summary, the data analyses performed on the MSS scores indicated no significant differences in levels of marital satisfaction among new mothers in differing employment situations. New fathers with wives fully employed and new fathers whose wives were unemployed appeared to be from homogenous subsets; however, fathers with partially employed wives differed from males in the fully-employed group. In all groupings, females reported significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction than did the male spouses.

A reliability check on the MSS yielded a split-half coefficient of .93 for this 48-item instrument.

Hobbs Crisis Index (HCI)

Hypothesis One: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

This hypothesis was tested by computing an analysis of variance between the three employment groupings of new mothers' scores on the HCI. As seen in Table 8, the F-ratio of .5921 was not significant. Based on this value, Hypothesis One is accepted, and it is concluded that no significant differences in perceived level of crisis exist among new mothers in the three different employment groups.

Hypothesis Two: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

Table 8 again illustrates that there were no significant differences between the group means obtained for new fathers on the Hobbs Crisis Index; hence, this hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Three: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI between new mothers and new fathers where the wife works full-time.

To test this hypothesis, a related sample t-test was used to compare the male and female means on the HCI for the full-time employment classification group. Table 9 shows the means and obtained t-value of 4.81 at $p < .001$. Based on this t-value, Hypothesis Three is rejected and it is concluded that new mothers in this group perceived higher levels of crisis related to the birth of their first child than did the new fathers.

Hypothesis Four: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife works part-time.

A t-value of 6.52 at $p < .001$ allows for rejection of Hypothesis Four. The female mean of 54.86 compared to the male mean of 43.86 indicates that the new mothers in this

employment group also perceived greater levels of crisis associated with the birth than did their spouses (see Table 9).

Hypothesis Five: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of crisis as measured by scores obtained on the HCI between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife is unemployed.

Again, this hypothesis is rejected based upon the obtained t-value of 5.8 at $p < .001$. Table 9 illustrates that the female mean of 52.54 is greater than the male mean of 44.34 for this employment group, indicating that the new mothers perceived significantly higher levels of crisis.

In summary, the first two hypotheses were accepted and indicate that the separate sexes formed homogenous groups on this measure regardless of employment status. The final three hypotheses, however, showed that differences exist between males and females for each employment group with females reporting higher levels of crisis than their male counterparts.

A reliability coefficient of .88 was obtained using Cronbach's Alpha on this 23-item scale.

Russell Gratification Checklist (RGC)

Hypothesis One: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC among new mothers who work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

This hypothesis is accepted. An analysis of variance performed on the group means yielded an F-ratio of .6254, $p = .5365$. New mothers from each employment status appear to be from an homogenous sample. Table 8 lists the appropriate means, standard deviations, ranges, and computed F for Hypothesis One.

Hypothesis Two: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC among new fathers whose wives work full-time, part-time, or are unemployed.

Again as shown in Table 8, the means computed for new fathers on the RGC are not significantly different. An F-ratio of 1.90, $p = .1525$ was obtained. Based on these computations, Hypothesis Two is accepted.

Hypothesis Three: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife works full-time.

Using a related sample t-test, the means between males and females in this employment group were found to be significantly different. The obtained $t = 2.71$ was significant at the $p < .01$ level. Table 9 illustrates that the females in this group obtained higher means, thus indicating that they perceived higher levels of parental gratification than did the males.

Hypothesis Four: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife works part-time.

Hypothesis Four postulated that couples in which the wife worked part-time would perceive similar levels of parental gratification at the time of data collection. From the results of the data analyses this premise was accepted ($t = -.06$, $p = .955$).

Table 9 reports the actual obtained means for the men and women studied in this hypothesis, which are almost identical.

Hypothesis Five: There are no significant differences in the perceived level of gratification as measured by scores obtained on the RGC between new mothers and new fathers in couples where the wife is unemployed.

The obtained t of 3.92, $p < .001$ computed for this hypothesis is reported in Table 9. Based upon this value, Hypothesis Five is rejected, and it is concluded that the females in this employment group perceive higher levels of gratification than do the male spouses in this group.

To summarize the results obtained from the Russell Gratification Checklist, Hypotheses One and Two were accepted. It appears that new mothers in each employment group form an homogenous subset with regard to levels of parental gratification. Similarly, new fathers also showed no differences based upon their wives' work status. The

final three hypotheses tested for differences between the males and females in each group. While significant differences were found between spouses when wives were fully-employed and when wives were unemployed, no differences were noted between spouses in the part-time employment group.

A split-half reliability coefficient was computed for the RGC using this study's sample data. The computed value ($r = .83$) is somewhat lower than the coefficient value of .93 reported by Russell (1974).

Life Role Saliency Scales (LRSS)

Sixteen hypotheses were generated from the eight subscales of the LRSS. The first eight hypotheses were analyzed for differences only among new mothers in each employment group on each scale, while the last eight hypotheses were tested for differences among new fathers' responses on each scale. The one-way analysis of variance was used to test each of the 16 hypotheses. Tables 10 and 11 report the means and F-ratios for females and males respectively on each subscale of the LRSS.

In the order of hypotheses presented in Chapter Three, the following hypotheses pertaining to new mothers were rejected: (1) Hypothesis One; (2) Hypothesis Three; (3) Hypothesis Five; (4) Hypothesis Six; and, (5) Hypothesis Eight. Rejection of these hypotheses indicate that significant differences were found among new mothers in the three employment groups on the Occupational Role Reward

TABLE 10
 LRSS SUBSCALE MEANS, F-VALUES, AND SIGNIFICANT MEAN SCORE
 DIFFERENCES FOR NEW MOTHERS
 WHO WORK FULL-TIME, PART-TIME, OR ARE UNEMPLOYED

SCALE	MEANS			F	DIFFERENCES
	N=50 Full-Time	N=50 Part-Time	N=50 Unemployed		
PRV	27.12	27.56	27.26	.33	
PRP	23.71	26.72	27.40	17.28*	a, b
MRV	24.34	26.36	25.94	5.87**	a, b
MRP	26.60	27.50	27.12	2.12	
ORV	16.94	12.12	12.92	19.26*	a, b
ORP	25.76	22.68	22.78	13.54*	a, b
HRV	26.50	26.60	26.78	.12	
HRP	25.02	26.88	26.72	5.63**	a, b

a = Significant mean score differences were noted between the full-time and part-time employment classifications using the Tukey-B procedure with the level of significance = .05.

b = Significant mean score differences were noted between the full time and unemployed classifications using the Tukey-B procedure with the level of significance = .05.

* $p < .0001$

** $p < .01$

TABLE 11
 LRSS SUBSCALE MEANS, F-VALUES, AND SIGNIFICANT
 MEAN SCORE DIFFERENCES FOR NEW FATHERS WHOSE WIVES WORK
 FULL-TIME, PART-TIME, OR ARE UNEMPLOYED

SCALE	MEANS			F	DIFFERENCES
	N=50 Full-Time	N=50 Part-Time	N=50 Unemployed		
PRV	26.00	27.42	26.14	3.24***	a
PRP	22.20	20.98	18.02	9.96*	b,c
MRV	24.30	25.74	24.96	1.72	
MRP	25.58	25.84	25.22	.57	
ORV	18.08	16.90	18.40	2.12	
ORP	25.54	25.44	25.90	.37	
HRV	25.62	26.28	24.61	3.06***	c
HRP	23.04	22.50	20.04	7.59**	b,c

* $p < .0001$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .05$

a = While the F-value, $p < .05$ indicated significant differences, the Tukey-B procedure at with the level of significance = .05 determined the three groups to be from one homogenous subset.

b = Significant mean score differences were noted between the full-time and unemployed classifications using the Tukey-B procedure with the level of significance = .05.

c = Significant mean score differences were noted between the part-time and unemployed classifications using the Tukey-B procedure with the level of significance = .05.

Value Scale (ORV), Marital Role Reward Value Scale (MRV), Occupational Role Participation Scale (ORP), Parental Role Participation Scale (PRP), and Home Maintenance Role Participation Scale (MRP). No differences were found in levels of parental role salience, domestic role salience, or marital role involvement.

The Tukey-B procedure at the .05 level of significance was utilized to determine which employment groups differed for each rejected hypothesis. On the ORV scale, new mothers employed full-time reported higher levels of occupational role salience than either partially-employed or unemployed mothers. No significant differences were noted between these two remaining groups. See Table 10 for a summary of these results.

New mothers with full-time employment again differed significantly from mothers in the part-time and unemployed groups on reported levels of marital role salience from the MRV scale. In this case, the fully-employed mothers assigned lower values to items on the MRV scale than did mothers from the other two groups. Again the unemployed mothers and partially-employed mothers appear to form an homogenous subset of the total sample of new mothers.

The Tukey-B analysis of scores from the Parental Role Participation Scale shows a similar pattern to the previously examined hypotheses. Only the fully-employed mothers differed significantly on their assigned values to

items on the PRP scale. Women from this group had significantly lower mean scores when compared to the partially-employed and unemployed mothers' mean scores. No differences were found by contrasting the partially-employed and unemployed group means.

An analysis of the differences between the groups on the final two scales (HRP and ORP) shows an identical trend. On each of these scales, only the new mothers with full-time employment had significantly different mean scores on the scales. The partially-employed and unemployed mothers formed homogenous subsets. On the HRP, the fully-employed mother assigned lower score values, while on the ORP these females assigned significantly higher score values than did the remaining two groups. Table 10 summarizes the results for all the Tukey analyses for differences.

Only three of the eight hypotheses pertaining to new fathers were rejected. In the order that the hypotheses were presented in Chapter Three, the rejected hypotheses are (1) Hypothesis Twelve, (2) Hypothesis Fourteen, and (3) Hypothesis Sixteen. Respectively, these rejections indicate differences among men in the three employment groups on the Home Maintenance Role Reward Value Scale (HRV), Parental Role Participation Scale (PRP), and Home Maintenance Role Participation Scale (MRP). No differences were found on either of the marital role scales (MRV and MRP), on either of the occupation role scales (ORV and ORP), or on the Parental Role Reward Value Scale (PRV).

The Tukey-B procedure at the .05 level of significance was again used to determine which employment groups differed significantly for the rejected hypotheses. Analyses for differences between the groups on the HRV scale revealed that only males whose wives held part-time employment and males whose wives were unemployed differed significantly in their assignments of scale values. Males with unemployed wives had the lowest mean score on this scale, while males with partially-employed wives had the highest mean score (see Table 11).

On the Parental Role Participation Scale (PRP) males whose wives were unemployed had significantly lower mean scores than did males from either the fully- or partially-employed groups. The males whose wives held outside employment did not differ significantly on this measure.

A similar pattern of differences was found for the HRP scale. Again, males whose wives were unemployed assigned lower values to items on this scale than did males whose wives were employed. No differences appeared between males in either of the employed categories (see Table 11).

To summarize, differences were found among mothers in the three employment groups on both occupational scales, on the marital role reward value scale, and on the participation levels of the parental role and home maintenance role scales. For each of these scales, only the fully-employed mothers assigned significantly different values to the scale items when compared to the scores

obtained by unemployed or partially-employed mothers. New fathers showed a varied trend in differences, with significant differences arising only on the two home maintenance scales and on the Parental Role Participation Scale. In all of these situations, only males whose wives were unemployed registered differences when compared to the remaining two employment categories.

Finally, reliability coefficients were tabulated for each of the eight scales of the LRSS. The range of scale reliabilities for each of the eight scales using Cronbach's Alpha is .59 - .81. Five of the eight scales (PRP, MRV, ORV, HRV, IIRP) had reliability coefficients greater than .75.

Descriptive Hypotheses

The three hypotheses in this category were analyzed by using crossbreak tables and computing chi squares for each table. The chi square analysis did not prove to be a useful statistic for any of these hypotheses, however, due to the fact that one-third to one-half of the cells in each table had expected frequencies of less than five. For each table created for the hypothesis relating to childcare task allocation, the minimum expected frequency computed was .50. For each table created for analyzing the two hypotheses relating to changes in the marital relationship before and after the child's birth, the minimum expected frequencies ranged from .50 to 4.0. Since theoretical use

of the chi square statistic requires minimum expected frequencies to be not less than five, the statistics obtained for the three hypotheses presented are difficult to interpret. Therefore, percentages were computed and; hence, are looked at for trends rather than significant differences.

Hypothesis One: There are no significant differences between husbands' and wives' assignments of percentages to each of the childcare activities listed in the "ideal" situation versus the "reality" situation among couples in each of the three employment classifications.

As mentioned above, crossbreak tables were organized for each of 10 childcare tasks listing the new mothers' and new fathers' perceptions of how the tasks should be allocated between spouses, and how the tasks actually were delegated between them. These perceptions were measured in percentage of time each spouse performed the activities. Percentages ranged from 0 to 100, thus many cells of the crossbreak tables had no frequency assignments. To alleviate the problem of low expected frequencies needed for chi square analysis, the researcher sought to collapse the tables by grouping the percentages. No consistent method of grouping the percentage across each of the 10 tasks was found which would solve the expected frequency problem, while still maintaining interesting differences between sex by employment group perceptions. Tables A-1 through A-10 (see Appendix D) were designed to determine if any trends exist in the way childcare task allocation is perceived by the spouses among differing employment groups. Frequencies

of subjects in each employment group are tabled according to the percentage of time ascribed to the task in both the "ideal" and "reality" situations. Total frequencies for each situation by sex perception are followed with the percentage of subjects in each category indicating a particular percentage period of time. For example, in Table A-1, 35 or 23.3% of all males perceived that the mother should ideally change diapers 76-100% of the time that both spouses are at home together. Conversely, only 9 or 6.0% of all females felt that the mother should ideally perform this task 76-100% of the time. In reality, however, 55 or 36.7% of males said that their wives did perform this task 76-100% of the time, while only 49 or 32.7% of the females saw themselves as performing the task 76-100% of the time.

A close examination of all 10 tables reveal the following general trends (see Tables A-1 through A-10, Appendix D):

- a) Males and females both perceive that childcare task allocation should be a fairly equal proposition as indicated by the high frequencies observed in the 26-50% range of ascribed time for task performance in each of the ideal perception categories.
- b) Males and females both perceive the mother "in reality" spending a greater percentage of their time together performing childcare

tasks than do fathers. This trend is indicated by observing greater frequencies in the higher percentage of time spent categories for real female task allocation, and fewer frequencies in the higher percentage of time spent categories for real male task allocations as perceived by both sexes.

- c) Despite the above noted trend for 50-50 task allocation, greater frequencies were assigned by both sexes to the upper percentages of time categories (51-100% of time given to task performance) for ideal female task allocation than were assigned to the ideal male task allocation categories. Hence, a portion of the total subject sample perceived childcare activities to be the mother's domain both ideally and in reality.
- d) In the upper percentage of time spent on task performance (76-100%), the highest frequency counts were, in general, ascribed to the non-working female in both the ideal and reality situations. Conversely, in the lowest percentage of time (0-25%) spent on task performance, the highest frequency counts were ascribed to males with non working wives in both the ideal

and reality situations. Hence, both males and females in the non working employment classification assigned higher percentages of time spent on childcare tasks to the mother than did males and females in the full-time and part-time working mother categories. No consistent trends were noted for these last two employment classification groups.

In summary, it is important to note that these trends have not been tested for significant differences either between the sexes or among employment classifications. Chi square evaluation of the crossbreak tables was felt to be inappropriate due to low expected frequencies in almost one-half of the tables' cells.

Hypothesis Two: There are no significant differences between ratings of the marital relationship prior to the baby's birth and ratings of the relationship after the baby's birth among women in each of the three employment classifications.

This hypothesis is accepted. The first statistical method intended to be used for analysis of the hypothesis was the organization of crossbreak tables with the corresponding chi square statistic. This method, however, was deemed inappropriate since one-half of all cells in each employment table had expected frequencies of less than five. Therefore, the second method used to analyze the

hypothesis was the two-way analysis of variance. In order to use the two-way ANOVA procedure, scale values had to be assigned to the degree of marital satisfaction noted by each subject both before the baby's birth and after the baby's birth. Assigned values ranged from 1 to 5 with 5 representing the "extremely satisfied" category. Once score values were assigned, mean scores were calculated for women's ratings of the relationship before the birth, and for their ratings of the relationship after the birth in each of the three employment classifications. The calculated F-values showed no significant differences in the marital ratings by employment group, nor were significant differences noted in the before and after ratings of marital satisfactions (see Table 12).

Hypothesis Three: There are no significant differences between ratings of the marital relationship prior to the baby's birth and ratings of the relationship after the baby's birth among men in each of the three employment classifications.

As with Hypothesis Two, this hypothesis was originally intended to be tested using crossbreak tables; however, since 6 of the 12 cells in each table had expected frequencies of less than 5, the chi square statistic was meaningless. As with the previous hypothesis, the two-way analysis of variance was chosen as an alternative method for testing the hypothesis. Scale values of 1 to 5 were again assigned to each of the marital satisfaction categories with

TABLE 12
 MEAN MARITAL RATINGS OF THE COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP
 BEFORE THE BABY'S BIRTH (RBB) AND THE
 RELATIONSHIP AFTER THE BABY'S BIRTH (RA) FOR FEMALES IN EACH
 EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY WITH CORRESPONDING ANOVA
 SUMMARY TABLE

EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION GROUP	MARITAL RATINGS	
	Relationship Before Birth	Relationship After Birth
Full-time	4.42	4.34
Part-time	4.70	4.46
Unemployed	4.48	4.38

TWO-WAY ANOVA SUMMARY

<u>SOURCES OF VARIATION</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MSS</u>	<u>F</u>
Employment Group	2	2.17	1.085	2.47
Marital Rating	1	1.48	1.48	3.36
Interaction (EG x MR)	2	.37	.185	.42
Error	294	130.58	.44	
TOTAL	299	134.60		

5 representing "extremely satisfied". Table 13 delineates the mean scale ratings both before the baby's birth and after the baby's birth for each of the three employment groups. The ANOVA summary shows that while no differences were found between the before and after ratings of marital satisfaction ($F=.55$), there were differences among the three employment groups for their overall ratings of satisfaction ($F=8.42$, $p<.001$). To determine which groups differed, the Tukey-B procedure was used to examine all possible pairwise contrasts. A contrast value of .21 was obtained indicating that men whose wives work part-time differed significantly in their overall rating of marital satisfaction from men in the remaining two employment groups. Men from the part-time employment classification rated their overall marital satisfaction as significantly higher than did men whose wives worked either full-time or were unemployed.

Further summaries of the data obtained on Hypotheses Two and Three are shown in Tables 14. These tables reflect the frequencies of females and males respectively falling into each scale category for both before birth and after birth relationship ratings. Table 15 summarizes the frequencies and corresponding percentages for the entire sample. Lastly, Table 16 represents t-test statistics calculated to determine if differences existed between male and female ratings of the relationship both before the birth ($t = -.158$, $p=.116$) and after the birth ($t = .96$, $p = .335$). No significant differences were found.

TABLE 13
 MEAN MARITAL RATINGS OF THE COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP BEFORE THE
 BABY'S BIRTH (RBB) AND THE RELATIONSHIP AFTER THE BABY'S
 BIRTH (RA) FOR MALES IN EACH EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY
 WITH CORRESPONDING ANOVA SUMMARY TABLE

EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION GROUP	MARITAL RATINGS	
	Relationship Before Birth	Relationship After Birth
Full-time	4.24	4.38
Part-time	4.66	4.64
Unemployed	4.34	4.38

TWO-WAY ANOVA SUMMARY

<u>SOURCES OF VARIATION</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MSS</u>	<u>F</u>
Employment Group	2	6.74	3.37	8.42*
Marital Rating	1	.22	.22	.55
Interaction	2	.32	.16	.40
Error	294	118.64	.40	
TOTAL	299	125.92		

* $p < .001$

TABLE 14
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF FEMALES' AND MALES' RATINGS OF
THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP BEFORE THE BABY'S BIRTH (RBB) AND THE
RELATIONSHIP AFTER THE BABY'S BIRTH (RA) FOR EACH EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION

SCALE RATING	EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION							
	N=50 FULL-TIME		N=50 PART-TIME		N=50 UNEMPLOYED		N=150 TOTAL	
FEMALE	RBB n(%)	RA n(%)	RBB n(%)	RA n(%)	RBB n(%)	RA n(%)	RBB n(%)	RA n(%)
Extremely Dissatisfying	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Dissatisfying	2(4)	2(4)	--	--	--	1(2)	2(1)	3(2)
Mixed	3(6)	1(2)	1(2)	1(2)	5(10)	4(8)	9(6)	6(4)
Satisfying	17(34)	25(50)	13(26)	25(50)	16(32)	20(40)	46(31)	70(47)
Extremely Satisfying	28(56)	22(44)	36(72)	24(48)	29(58)	25(50)	93(62)	71(47)
MALE								
Extremely Dissatisfying	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Dissatisfying	2(4)	1(2)	--	--	--	--	2(1)	1(.7)
Mixed	4(8)	7(14)	--	--	3(6)	3(6)	7(5)	10(7)
Satisfying	24(48)	14(28)	17(34)	18(36)	27(54)	25(50)	68(45)	57(38)
Extremely Satisfying	20(40)	28(56)	33(66)	32(64)	20(40)	22(44)	73(49)	82(55)

TABLE 15
 FREQUENCIES/PERCENT OF TOTAL SAMPLE (MALES AND FEMALES)
 RATINGS OF THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP BEFORE THE BABY'S BIRTH (RBB)
 AND THE RELATIONSHIP AFTER THE BABY'S BIRTH (RA) FOR EACH EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION

SCALE RATING	N=100 FULL-TIME		N=100 PART-TIME		N=100 UNEMPLOYED		N=300 TOTAL	
	RBB n=%	RA n=%	RBB n=%	RA n=%	RBB n=%	RA n=%	RBB n(%)	RA n(%)
Extremely Dissatisfying	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Dissatisfying	4	3	--	--	--	1	4(1.3)	4(1.3)
Mixed	7	8	1	1	8	7	16(5.3)	16(5.3)
Satisfying	41	39	30	43	43	45	114(38)	127(42.3)
Extremely Satisfying	48	50	69	56	49	47	166(55.3)	153(51.0)

TABLE 16
 INDEPENDENT SAMPLE t-TEST OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE MEAN
 RATINGS OF THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP BEFORE THE BABY'S BIRTH (RBB)
 AND THE RELATIONSHIP AFTER THE BABY'S BIRTH (RA)

VARIABLE	SEX	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	t	2-TAILED PROBABILITY
RBB	Male	150	4.41	.647	-.158	.116
	Female	150	4.53	.672		
RA	Male	150	4.47	.652	.96	.335
	Female	150	4.39	.665		

Summary

Thirty-four hypotheses were analyzed in this chapter. The hypotheses were structured to look for differences on two basic levels. The first level was designed to look for differences between the sexes on measures of marital satisfaction, parental gratification, and transition to parenthood crisis. The second level dealt with employment classification groups, and sought to determine if differences exist among men and women grouped according to the wife's employment status as either full-time, part-time, or unemployed. Along with the measures of satisfaction, gratifications and crisis, measures of childcare task allocation and adult role expectations and participation levels were examined for differences in this second level of analysis.

Considering these two levels, the following results were reported. Significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction, as measured by the MSS, were reported by females in each employment group than were reported by males; however, no significant differences in levels of satisfaction were found among women in the three employment groups. For males, only husbands whose wives work part-time differed significantly from the other employment groupings. Men from the part-time group reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than their peers.

On levels of parental gratification, as measured by Russell's Gratification Checklist (1974), no differences were found among either the males' or the females' ratings across employment groups. Males and females, however, did differ in their ratings of gratification with males reporting lower levels than the females in the full-time and unemployed groups. No differences between the sexes were noted in the part-time group.

Measures of crisis associated with first-time parenthood yielded similar results. No differences in levels of crisis were found for either men or women across the three employment groups. Males and females, however, did differ in their crisis scores. Females consistently reported significantly higher levels of crisis than their spouses regardless of the couple's employment status.

The use of the Life Role Salience Scales provided interesting data for both levels of analysis. For the women in the study, employment status only registered significant differences for mothers employed full-time. The part-time and unemployed mothers formed an homogenous subset of the sample. Fully-employed mothers obtained significantly lower scores on items measuring levels of parental role involvement, marital role salience, and home maintenance role involvement, while obtaining significantly higher scores on items measuring occupational role salience and occupational role involvement. For the males in the study, a very different pattern evolved. Only males whose

wives were unemployed obtained significantly different measures from the males in the remaining two groups. Males whose wives chose not to work following the birth of the first child obtained significantly lower scores on items measuring home maintenance (domestic) role salience, home maintenance role involvement, and parental role involvement.

For the two hypotheses designed to rate the marital relationship both before and after the babys' birth, the following results were reported. Males and females did not differ in their ratings. Females did not differ in either the before or after ratings in any of the employment groups, nor did the males differ in the before and after ratings. Males did, however, differ in their overall ratings of relationship satisfaction according to employment group. Males whose wives work part-time reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction than did the males whose wives were fully-employed or unemployed.

Finally, looking at childcare task allocation in the "ideal" and "reality" categories yielded interesting trends. These trends were not tested for significant differences due to the method in which measures were obtained.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a first birth on husbands' and wives' work and family role satisfactions and expectations. The specific work and family roles examined were (1) the parental role, (2) the marital role, (3) the domestic or home maintenance role, and (4) the occupational role. New mother's occupational role status was purposefully manipulated to examine whether there were differences in levels of role satisfaction, role expectations, and role participation among couples of varying employment status. Three types of couples were examined: (1) couples in which the wife returned to full-time employment, (2) couples in which the wife returned to part-time employment, and (3) couples in which the wife chose unemployment following the first child's birth. This chapter contains a discussion of the research results, the conclusions of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

To examine the impact of the first birth on perceived levels of parental and marital role satisfaction among couples of varying employment statuses, four instruments were used. These instruments were (1) the

Hobbs Crisis Index (Hobbs, 1965), (2) the Gratification Checklist (Russell, 1974), (3) the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 1981), and (4) the Satisfaction Change Scale (Guerney, 1977). The first two instruments were incorporated into this study to replicate previous research methodologies which examined the labeling of the transition to parenthood as a crisis experience. The final two instruments were chosen to examine the impact of the first birth on marital role satisfaction. Since previous research has suggested that the first birth has a negative effect on the marriage, this study sought to obtain more definitive information on this impact across employment groups.

An examination of the data obtained from each of these four scales revealed an unexpected absence of differences in the measurement results across employment groups when husbands' and wives' scores were analyzed separately. High levels of both parental and marital satisfaction were reported by the husbands and wives regardless of their employment status, while simultaneously low levels of crisis were noted.

Looking specifically at the measures of parental crisis and parental gratification, subjects in this study checked a far higher proportion of "gratification" items associated with the first birth than they did "crisis" items. For all 12 items on the Russell Gratification Checklist, 74-100% of the subjects responded favorably to

the items; whereas, the highest proportion of subjects responding to any of the crisis items ranged from 51-76%. Only 7 of 23 "crisis" items on the Hobbs Crisis Index had these high proportion of respondents. It appears, as Russell (1974) concluded, that the satisfactions obtained from new parenthood roles do indeed mitigate the severity of any crises encountered. This contention is further supported when one examines the mean scores obtained by subjects in this study's sample. Using LeMasters' (1957) five-point rating of no crisis, slight crisis, moderate crisis, extensive crisis, and severe crisis, the scores from this sample indicate that 94% of the subjects reported slight or no crisis associated with the birth. Modifying this scale by substituting gratification scores, however, yielded results where 93.7% of the subjects reported extensive or extreme levels of gratification.

Similarly high ratings of marital satisfaction were revealed from analyses of husbands' and wives' scores on the Marital Satisfaction Scale and the Satisfaction Change Scale. Data derived from both scales again indicated that this study's sample, regardless of wives' employment statuses, rated their current marital situation as satisfying to extremely satisfying. Total sample breakdown indicated that none of the 300 subjects rated their marriages as extremely dissatisfying on either scale. On the Marital Satisfaction Scale only 1.7% of the subjects

reported dissatisfaction, while on the Satisfaction Change Scale only 1.3% reported dissatisfaction both before and after the birth. Conversely, on the MSS, 75.3% of the sample rated their marriages as satisfying to extremely satisfying and 93.3% had similar ratings both before and after the birth on the Satisfaction Change Scale.

The only significant differences obtained when husbands' and wives' satisfaction scores were analyzed separately occurred among husbands. On both the Marital Satisfaction Scale and the Satisfaction Change Scale, males whose wives were employed part-time reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction than did males whose wives were employed full-time. While not a significant difference, this group of males also obtained higher mean satisfaction scores than did males whose wives were unemployed. This same male employment group difference occurred on both the before and after birth ratings on the Satisfaction Change Scale.

A comparison of this study's satisfaction outcome measures with previous research results reveals that this study's sample reported higher levels of parental role gratification (Russell, 1974), higher levels of marital role satisfaction (Feldman, 1971; Miller and Sollie, 1980; Rollins and Feldman, 1970; Ryder, 1973; Waldron and Routh, 1981), and, conversely, lower levels of parental role crisis (Beauchamp, as cited in Jacoby, 1969; Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1968; Hobbs and Cole, 1976; Hobbs and Wimbish, 1977;

LeMasters, 1957; Russell, 1974) than were reported by other transition to parenthood research samples. Despite these high levels of reported satisfaction, this study's sample was found, nevertheless, to check similar crisis items noted in the previous research. Bothersome problems which were checked in the "sometimes" or "always" categories by 50% or more of the subjects included (1) interruption at routines (76%), (2) additional amounts of work (51.6%), (3) housekeeping not as neat as it should be (57.3%), (4) decreased sexual responsiveness of self (52%), (5) increased money problems (57%), (6) physical tiredness or fatigue (71.7%), and (7) feeling "edgy" or emotionally upset (53.6%). These noted items, however, did not appear to impact upon marital satisfaction. Unlike previous studies, which reported declines in marital satisfaction after the birth of the first child (Feldman, 1971; Rollins and Feldman, 1970), this study witnessed no such decline for husbands and wives in the three employment groups.

Several factors related to both the demographic features of the research sample and to the research methodology may be responsible for these differences in results. Looking first at the demographic characteristics of this study's sample, it is important to note that 79.3% of the couples reported the first birth to be a planned event. Although most of the early transition to parenthood studies did not report the planning of the conception, Russell (1974) noted that "the first child being planned was

found to be negatively related to degree of crisis for both men and women, [and that] this relationship was even stronger among women who had been working before the birth of their child" (p. 297). Furthermore, Russell (1974) found that "wanting more children was negatively associated with crisis for men, but unrelated among women" (p. 297). The high percentage of planned births for couples participating in this study, coupled with the facts that all of the wives worked full-time prior to the first birth and that 86% of the couples reported a desire to have more children, appears to have a strong relationship to this sample's high levels of parental and marital role satisfaction. The planning of a pregnancy has also been associated with reduced role conflict, increased role clarity, increased anticipatory socialization, and decreased levels of difficulty in the transition to parenthood (Steffensmeier, 1982). Lastly, McLaughlin's and Micklin's (1983) measurement of personal efficacy in relation to the timing of the first birth suggests that early first births, such as found in unplanned teen pregnancies, result in a loss of personal efficacy or control.

The research on personal efficacy discerns another demographic feature of this study's sample which impacts upon the high satisfaction ratings. That feature is this sample's apparent postponement of the first birth. The average age of husbands and wives in this research project was determined to be 29.65 years, with the average length of

the marriage to be 5.43 years. These figures distinguish this sample as older and more established in their marital relationship than many new parents in our society. In addition, this study's sample was a highly educated and highly professional group of subjects who were established in occupational commitments prior to the first birth. That perceived personal efficacy is known to increase with age (McLaughlin and Micklin, 1983) indicates again that this study's sample may have perceived more control over their transition to parenthood status; hence, allowing for greater levels of perceived satisfaction. Russell (1974) also noted a negative association between age and reported levels of crisis for men, and between length of marriage and perceived levels of crisis for women. Finally, in light of Feldman's (1971) finding that postpartum improvements in marital satisfaction were positively correlated with differentiated marital relationships, it appears that couples in this study may fit into this pattern with regard to age, educational level, and profession. Higher levels of these three variables, plus the fact that all mothers in this study held full-time employment prior to delivery, indicate that these subjects may have reached levels of secure establishment in occupational, educational, and family roles allowing them to integrate the new parenting role with less conflict. Relevant to this postulation between life stage and incidence of conflict is Gilbert, Holahan, and Manning's (1981) research on the coping strategies of working mothers

citing role redefinition (or modification of demands attached to roles) as the coping strategy used by older women, while younger working mothers utilized a role expansion strategy (or an attempt to meet all demands). Perhaps older first-time parents may redefine their roles since they are more established, while younger parents simply accumulate a new role with all its new stresses while trying to maintain progress in other life role responsibilities. These findings may differentially affect new parents' ratings of crisis, gratification, and marital satisfaction.

From the previous discussion, it is concluded that the factors of pregnancy planning, first birth postponement with regard to age and length of marriage, and the availability of resources due to occupational level and educational status of the subjects may have moderated the level of stress perceived by the husbands and wives as they made the transition to parenthood. It is conceivable that very different results in satisfaction levels across the three employment classifications might have been evidenced if a younger, less educated group of subjects had been sampled. Hence, comparing this study's results of parental and marital satisfaction with previous research results emphasizes the importance of evaluating measures of satisfaction within both the context of the birth event and the availability of financial and other resources. Future research will, therefore, need to examine methods of

evaluating the birth event within the personal context of how the event is perceived in relation to the availability of coping resources.

A second level of analysis on this study's outcome measures further emphasized the importance of studying perceived levels of marital satisfaction within a specific birth event context. This second level of analysis was designed to compare the obtained satisfaction scores between husbands and wives in each of the three employment groups. As noted, when husbands' and wives' scores were analyzed separately, both sexes reported high levels of parental and marital satisfaction. In general, variances were not demonstrated among the employment groups. However, when husbands' and wives' scores were compared for differences, a different pattern emerged. The observed trend was that on the Hobbs Crisis Index (Hobbs, 1965), the Gratification Checklist (Russell, 1974), and the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 1981) wives perceived higher levels of crisis, higher levels of gratification, and higher levels of marital satisfaction than did their husbands. This difference pattern was not evidenced on the Satisfaction Change Scale (Guerney, 1977). Furthermore, sex was found to be a significant variable across all employment groups, except for spouses in the part-time employment classification for measures of gratification. This tendency of wives to obtain higher parental satisfaction and crisis scores appears to be a measurement tradition, and supports

results obtained by Beauchamp (as cited in Jacoby, 1969), Hobbs (1965), Hobbs and Cole (1976), and Russell (1974). That mothers, in general, report both higher levels of crisis and gratification than fathers is an interesting result. Many factors may be associated with this difference. For example, although both mothers and fathers experience some degree of stress, the nature of the stress varies. Rossi (1968, 1977) claims that the first pregnancy involves a greater transition for women than for men. In addition, Rossi (1977) states that physiological factors at work in women from pregnancy, internalized sex roles from childhood socialization, and cultural expectations will affect the way in which women respond to changes occurring during the transition to parenthood. That primary responsibility for childcare is left to the woman even when she returns to work following childbirth has also been noted by investigators in relation to the amount of stress and gratification perceived by the sexes (Berk and Berk, 1979; Hoffman, 1978; Hoffman and Manis, 1978). Lastly, Hobbs and Wimbish (1977) state that mothers and fathers differ in the timing of the adaptation process, and that this difference can be explained by means of traditional gender roles. From these investigations, it is conceived that at the time of this study's data collection, when infants were only 6-9 months of age, that women still performed a majority of childcare tasks due to physiological and cultural demands. The extra time taken with the infant may contribute both to

higher degrees of stress and higher levels of gratification as mothers watch their infants develop. The lack of significant differences between males' and females' mean gratification scores in the part-time employment group is the only finding which does not support this conclusion.

Although the finding of higher levels of parental crisis and parental satisfaction among new mothers as compared to new fathers has been supported by previous research, the outcome of greater marital satisfaction among new mothers does not coincide with previous research. Several investigators have found that even if no significant changes in marital satisfaction following the first birth were reported by fathers, that wives were likely to report decreases in marital satisfaction or to view their marriages as changing negatively after the first child's birth (Miller and Sollie, 1980; Ryder, 1973; Waldron and Routh, 1981). These contrasts in findings may be due to several factors. First, this study employed different measuring scales than previous studies which used the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke and Wallace, 1959). Second, this study did not assess change through pre- and post-measurements. Measurement of satisfaction was obtained at one point in time with subjects having been asked to report if changes occurred on the Satisfaction Change Scale. This method may have introduced error of memory biases in favor of presenting a good image. Furthermore, since change scores on marital satisfaction were not obtained from prepartum to

postpartum, it was impossible for this study to determine if the new mothers and new fathers had equal or varying levels of change on this outcome measure. It is possible that change scores would have shown dramatic differences in husbands' and wives' levels of satisfaction.

The third, and final, factor which may have influenced the high levels of satisfaction obtained by the new mothers and new fathers is reflected in this study's measurement of role expectations and role task structuring. In the original planning of this study, it was perceived that the variables of role expectations and role task allocation might influence the levels of satisfaction reported by husbands and wives in the three employment groups. It was found that even though husbands and wives in each of the three employment groups reported similarly high levels of parental and marital satisfaction following their first child's birth, distinctive differences in role expectations and role task structuring were found among the husbands and wives in the three groups.

The differences in role expectations and role task structuring were evidenced from male and female scores obtained on the Life Role Salience Scales (Amatea, Cross, Clark, and Bobby, 1986). This instrument was designed to measure the occupational, marital, parental, and domestic (home maintenance) role expectations of men and women of varying ages. The scale items were designed to assess both the reward value and the style of participation for each of

these four life role areas; hence, eight scales were developed. Among these eight scales some interesting findings occurred suggesting that the mother's employment status does, in some areas, interact with both role reward value and role participation levels. For females, in particular, the full-time employment group displayed significant differences from the partially-employed or unemployed groups of women. The fully-employed mother obtained significantly lower mean scores on the Parental Role Participation Scale, the Marital Role Reward Value Scale, and the Home Maintenance Role Participation Scale. Conversely, the fully-employed mother obtained significantly higher scores on both the Occupational Role Reward Value and Occupational Role Participation Scales. No differences were found between partially-employed and unemployed mothers. That the fully-employed mother should obtain high scores on both occupational scales is not surprising. After all, it is this female who chose to remain fully-employed while the other two groups of mothers chose to give up full-time work when they became mothers. This level of occupational commitment, however, did not signify differences from other mothers in levels of parental self-investment and expected satisfactions as measured by the Parental Role Reward Value Scale. Nor did this commitment signify differences in scores obtained on the Home Maintenance Role Reward Value Scale. The lower mean scores on parental and domestic participation levels might be expected since the full-time

employed mother has less personal time to commit herself to parenting and home maintenance tasks. The tasks associated with parenting participation levels must, by necessity, be doled out in childcare arrangements while the mother is at work. Home maintenance tasks may similarly be doled out to employed help. The lower mean score obtained on the Marital Role Reward Value Scale by full-time employed mothers may also indicate an interaction between occupational and marital role involvement. More psychological involvement in an occupation may result in the fully-employed woman placing less emphasis on seeking the majority of her life satisfaction from her marriage. Instead expectations for life satisfaction may be spread across several arenas.

Significant differences in life role expectations were also noted among husbands in the three groups. Males whose wives were unemployed reported significantly lower values than males with fully- or partially-employed wives on the Parental Role Participation Scale, the Home Maintenance Role Reward Value Scale, and the Home Maintenance Role Participation Scale. The wife's employment status did not appear to differentially affect the father's attitudes on the two occupational scales, two marital scales, or the parental role reward value scale. These results seem logical when one considers that the males in this study did not report making any drastic changes in their occupational work roles as a result of the baby's birth. All men maintained full-time employment; hence, their time and

energy commitments allotted to occupational roles did not need to be altered significantly. Similarly, husbands did not perceive changes in their marital role structure. Finally, as with the females, all employment groups of fathers rated parental role salience on equal levels. That differences existed among men whose wives remained unemployed on levels of parental role involvement, home maintenance role involvement, and home maintenance role salience may be explained by theories purporting the traditionalization of the marriage following the birth of the first child. Fully-employed men with unemployed wives find themselves in our society's most traditional marital arrangement, whereby parenting and domestic chores become "women's work", while "bread-winning" becomes "men's work". This type of traditionalization of the marital and sex roles during the transition to parenthood is well documented (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Cowan, Cowan, Coie, and Coie, 1978; Hoffman, 1978; Hoffman and Manis, 1978; LaRossa, 1977; LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981; Lamb, 1978; Meyerowitz and Feldman, 1966; Quarm, 1977), and should not necessarily be viewed negatively. The LaRossa's (1981) explain this trend toward traditionalization as the new parents way of seeking an arrangement which allows both parents personal time. Task equality in negotiations over childcare and domestic chores is not necessarily a fair arrangement for couples in different employment situations. Considering the wife's role in the traditionalization of the marriage by opting to

quit work and considering that these wives did not differ significantly from employed mothers in their levels of marital satisfaction suggest that her husband's perceptions do not interfere with the couple's ability to mutually agree on a fair arrangement for task allocation.

To further explore male and female perceptions of task allocation, couples in this study were asked to ascribe the percentage of time "ideally" and "in reality" spent by each spouse on 10 separate childcare activities when the couples were at home together. The four trends in task allocation were noted which parallel those reported by other researchers. The first trend was that both sexes, across all three groups, felt that ideally childcare tasks should be divided equally. Modal responses for all tasks in the ideal categories fell right in the 50% range when total sample responses were analyzed. This expectation reflects cultural changes occurring among highly educated and highly professional couples in today's society. The second trend, however, was that despite expectations for equal allocation of tasks, both males and females perceived that, in reality, the mothers spent greater proportions of joint time together performing the childcare responsibilities. Thus, it appears that in terms of childcare some traditionalization of the couple relationship occurs. These two trends support the findings of Cowan, Cowan, Coie, and Coie (1978) who noted that beliefs about parenthood and childcare time allotment shifted toward more traditional ideas from

pregnancy to postpartum. Inequities in division of labor, despite the wife's employment status, following the birth of the first child have also been noted by Berk and Berk (1979), Hoffman (1978), Hoffman and Manis (1978), and LaRossa and LaRossa (1981). The third trend described in Chapter IV observed that a portion of the total sample perceived childcare activities to be the mother's domain both ideally and in reality, thus lending further support to theories of traditionalization.

The fourth trend in the task allocation data is notable in that it corresponds with the findings from the Life Role Salience Scales in which the males with unemployed wives reported lower levels of parental and domestic participation than males with working wives. In this trend, it was noted that both males and females, when the mother was unemployed, assigned higher percentages of time to be spent on childcare tasks to the mother in both the ideal and real time spent categories. It may be concluded from this and other studies (Bohen and Viveros-Long, 1981; Pleck, 1979) that men whose wives work do more hours of family work than men whose wives are unemployed. This finding suggests that attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about one's roles may have a greater impact on role satisfaction and/or conflict than do discrepancies in task equality. The importance of attitudes and beliefs with regard to role satisfaction is noted by Hoffman and Manis (1978) when they describe the contradictions evidenced in the evaluation of

the transition to parenthood experience. In summary, Hoffman and Manis (1978) found that despite research findings showing that the first child dichotomizes men's and women's roles, increases financial worries, decreases the amount of time the husband spends on household tasks, and restricts the couple's freedom, parents view parenthood positively and see children as bringing them satisfaction and fulfillment in life.

From these role expectation and role allocation results, it becomes apparent that the husbands and wives in these three employment groups were involved in qualitatively different life role structures. The participation levels of the husbands and wives on the parental, marital, occupational, and home maintenance scales of the Life Role Salience Scales varied dramatically between the sexes when analyzed according to the wife's employment status. Furthermore, the trends related to measures of childcare task allocation supported these differences in levels of role participation by new mothers and new fathers. These differences in levels of participation did not result in differences in marital or parental satisfaction. In fact, each group reported distinctively high marital and parental role satisfaction.

It may be that the husbands and wives in these three groups felt a greater sense of personal choice and control in choosing a distinctive life role structure for themselves than did parents of an earlier generation. For

example, new mothers in today's society are finding support for returning to their careers after childbirth. Childcare alternatives are burgeoning. In addition, support groups targeted for the working mother are now being offered by mental health professionals to deal with issues of role conflict, childcare, division of home maintenance labor, and familial relationships (Alpert, 1981). When research on the transition to parenthood was begun in the 1950s, societal pressures for women to remain in the home with preschool children were at a peak. The baby boom generation's mothers may not have perceived an alternative other than full-time motherhood. Such an increase in socially sanctioned alternatives has also been coupled with the fact that there is now greater possible control over reproduction and the timing of children. Thus, as mentioned, earlier, most couples in this study reported a planned pregnancy. The control they exhibited in planning their family suggests a similar level of control in other role areas. Levels of occupational commitment by the wives could be planned to coincide with the development of the family. Finally, these two factors, along with the actual measures obtained for role expectations and levels of role participation, indicate that among husbands and wives in the three employment groups there was relative concurrence between levels of role expectations and actual role participation. Couples appear to be engaged in activities they planned to be doing with regard to parental, marital, occupational, and domestic

roles. This concurrence of role values and role enactment might result in greater role satisfaction. It also supports current research suggesting that multiple role enactment leads to higher levels of self-esteem and satisfaction than does an exclusive single-minded commitment to either the occupational or the familial role (Baruch and Barnett, 1980; Birnbaum, 1975).

Two questions arose during analysis of this study's results which could not be answered by the obtained data. The first question concerns the permeability of role boundaries. A basic postulate of this study was that the new mother's employment status might differentially affect levels of parental and marital satisfaction, due to an increase in role-related stresses as new parents combined multiple role responsibilities. This was not found. It is possible, therefore, that couples were able to maintain high levels of role differentiation. The ability of couples to successfully differentiate roles may be reflected by the number of divorced couples in today's society who have sharp lines of demarcation between marital and parental responsibilities. Furthermore, research reported by ✓ Pearlin (1980) indicates that role-related stress does not have a significant spillover effect from one role to another. If one role-related stress remains segregated from other roles, it is highly possible that levels of satisfaction in other roles would remain constant also.

In conjunction with the question on role boundary permeability is the second question concerning role-related coping strategies. How are role-related stresses managed? Are attitudes or beliefs regarding ongoing roles altered when a new role such as parenting is acquired? Do coping strategies vary with different age, education, gender, social class, and race variables?

Conclusions

This study sought to examine husbands' and wives' occupational and familial role experiences following the birth of the couple's first child. The familial roles researched included parental, marital, and domestic roles. The occupational roles varied according to the wife's employment status at six to nine months postpartum. The husbands' and wives' experience in these roles, were examined by analyzing their rating of parental crisis, parental gratification, marital satisfaction, perceived ideal childcare task allocation, perceived real childcare task allocation, and levels of role salience and role participation for parental, marital, domestic, and occupational roles. In addition, several demographic characteristics of the sample population were noted. The data were collected only at postpartum; hence, measurements did not reflect changes in roles from prepartum to postpartum.

It was concluded that differences in the wife's employment status did not significantly affect new mothers' and fathers' perceptions of levels of crisis or gratification associated with the birth of their first child. In addition, the wife's employment status did not differentially affect the new mother's perceived level of marital satisfaction. This latter conclusion is at variance with the findings of earlier studies in which mothers reported decreased levels of satisfaction.

There were significant differences however between husbands and wives in each of the three groups on these three variables. Females reported higher levels of crisis, gratification, and marital satisfaction than did their spouses. Only males in the part-time group strayed from this trend by matching their wives' levels of parental gratification.

Assessments of husbands' and wives' role expectations revealed significant differences among the three groups. Full-time employed mothers differed significantly from the other two groups in levels of occupational role participation, occupational role salience, marital role salience, parental role participation, and home maintenance role participation. Fathers, however, exhibited a different configuration with husbands of the unemployed wives differing significantly from the other two groups of husbands only in levels of parental role participation, home maintenance role participation, and home maintenance role

salience. Data collected on expectations about and implementation of specific childcare tasks supported these differences with unemployed mothers' husbands differing significantly from the other two employed groups.

These conclusions suggest important directions for future research. The extent of the mother's engagement in occupational roles appears to be related to both husbands' and wives' familial and occupational role expectations. Levels of parental and marital satisfaction do not appear to be adversely affected by employment status. It is suggested, therefore, that the attitudes and beliefs that new parents have about their occupational and familial roles are important variables to consider in examining role satisfaction. By describing more fully the nature of the role structure preferred and enacted, the impact of the first child's birth may be studied more systematically.

In addition, since role expectations and levels of role involvement appear to differ by both the extent of women's employment and (by gender), and since these differences do not appear to adversely affect levels of satisfaction reported for parental and marital roles, it seems important to examine how spouses, individually and collectively, adjust their relationship to integrate new parenting role demands. The results of this study suggest that husbands and wives may cognitively structure their roles differently in order to integrate the new parenting role demands with older, ongoing role demands.

Finally, the positive evaluation of the first child's birth by a sample distinctively characterized in terms of the extent of family planning, the older age of parents, the length of the marriage, and the availability of occupational and financial resources suggests that these may be significant factors which may moderate the stress of a first child's birth. Thus, future researchers may need to carefully describe the developmental stage and personal resources of first-time parents in studying the impact of the first child's birth.

Recommendations

This study made a first attempt at exploring how differences in first-time parents' occupational commitments impacted upon their perceived levels of marital and parental role satisfaction. The variables of role expectations and role task allocation were also examined to determine their level of influence on role satisfactions for the three employment groups.

While the results suggested an interaction between occupational role engagement and other familial role expectations, occupational commitments did not differentially affect levels of satisfaction. From the questions left unanswered by these results, several recommendations for future research on the transition to parenthood can be made.

First, this study was unable to perform any cause and effect analyses since the data were collected only once; hence, changes in role expectations and role satisfactions were not directly measured. Future research might incorporate prepartum and postpartum measures if time and money is available.

Second, this study must also limit its generalizability to a very narrow cross-section of the adult population, consisting of white, urban, middle-class couples with first borns between six and nine months of age. Since, this sample was also highly educated, professional, and older at the time of the first birth these characteristics also limit the generalizability to other groups. Future research which is more representative of variances in age, education, socioeconomic, and occupational levels should be planned.

Third, the major task for future research in this area is for investigators to elaborate and improve on the problems considered. Questions dealing with role boundary permeability, role conflict, and role conflict coping strategies during the transition to parenthood must be addressed. Since conflict is thought to be deleterious to general well-being and to life satisfaction, it is important to uncover the strategies used by new parents to alleviate the problems.

Fourth, the method in which information was gathered in this study was traditional and linear in its scope. A mailed questionnaire was used. Future research may need to consider new and emerging methodologies which are more capable of tapping into the complexities of role interactions. Scheduled interviews or taped experimentally-manipulated situations might provide new insights on a couple's use of negotiating tactics in assignments of role task allocations.

Finally, it is suggested that the results of this and future studies be incorporated into parenthood education programs. Couples today are faced with a myriad of decisions following the birth of the first child. Employment status of the wife is perhaps the most immediate of these decisions, and will impact upon the couple's financial well-being and upon the couple's participation level in the parent role. Fathers and mothers need to be educated on how combining multiple roles may affect their levels of role satisfaction, role participation, and role expectations. Furthermore, knowledge of coping strategies for dealing with role-related stresses may be beneficial. An understanding of how these factors interrelate can be utilized to aid couples in their decision-making processes regarding employment and childrearing activities.

APPENDIX A
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my doctoral research project. As a new parent myself, I understand how valuable your time has become since the birth of your child; hence, I really appreciate your cooperation in completing the enclosed questionnaire materials.

The questionnaire has been designed so that minimal writing is required. In most instances, you need only to circle or check your responses. Do not spend too much time in deciding how to respond to any particular question. It is better to rely on your immediate feelings to each question and to respond accordingly. Please note that it is very important that you and your spouse do not compare responses while completing the questionnaire items. Each spouse should work independently. If you desire, I will be very happy to share the results of this study with you when the research is completed.

So that the results may be published this year, I would like to ask that you return the questionnaires as soon as possible. Once the questionnaires have been received, a small gift of appreciation will be sent to you for your child for taking the time to participate in this research project.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. You may reach me at (703) 683-0226.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Carol L. Bobby, M.Ed., Ed.S.
Doctoral Student, University of Florida
Department of Counselor Education

enclosures

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Your participation is being requested to complete a series of questions regarding your parental, marital, and occupational life roles. There are no right or wrong answers. The purpose of this research is to examine how spouses feel about each of these roles, and to discover how they balance each of these roles in their lives. Completion of the questionnaire will take approximately one hour.

All information collected will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without prejudice. No monetary compensation will be awarded.

I hope that you will participate, since this research may provide useful information on how new parents cope with their multiple roles as they become a family. If you have any questions concerning the study, feel free to contact me at (703) 683-0226.

_____ detach and keep
_____ detach and return

"I have read and I understand the procedure described above. I agree to participate in the study and I have received a copy of this description."

_____(husband)
_____(date)

_____(wife)
_____(date)

Principal Investigator. Carol L. Bobby, M.Ed., Ed.S.

APPENDIX C
LIFE ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Code # _____

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore life role involvements and how you feel about them. Note that only code numbers are used for identification of the questionnaire forms so that the information you provide will be kept confidential. Please feel free to elaborate on any question(s) which you believe need a more thorough explanation.

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Sex _____ Age _____ Race _____ Marital Status _____

2. Please circle the highest number of years of education completed:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	20+	

Name your highest degree, if appropriate: _____

3. Please indicate you and your spouse's combined yearly income:

_____ under \$10,000	_____ \$30,000-\$35,000
_____ \$10,000-\$15,000	_____ \$35,000-\$40,000
_____ \$15,000-\$20,000	_____ \$40,000-\$45,000
_____ \$20,000-\$25,000	_____ \$45,000-\$50,000
_____ \$25,000-\$30,000	_____ over \$50,000

II. OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

A. 1. What is your current occupation? _____

2. How many hours per week are devoted to this occupation? _____

3. Consider the following definitions:

career - a full-extended working out of a purposeful life pattern through work undertaken by an individual. Work, in this sense, may include educational endeavors, paid employment,

and/or volunteer experiences designed to prepare individuals for their chosen life work. A career may include a sequence of occupations.

occupation - one's principal or current employment;
one's work activity.

Do you consider your current occupation to be in line with your chosen career path? ____ Yes ____ No

- B. 1. Did both you and your spouse work full-time before the birth of your child? ____ Yes ____ No
2. Has the birth of your child affected either of your employment statuses? ____ Yes ____ No
- If yes, whose employment has been affected and how?
- _____
- _____

3. Does your financial situation require that both spouses work outside of the home? ____ Yes ____ No

III. MARITAL INFORMATION

- A. 1. Check your current marital status.

_____ first marriage	_____ unmarried, long term relationship
_____ remarried	_____ other, please specify: _____

2. How many years have you been in your present relationship? _____
- B. This section of the questionnaire contained the 48 items from the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach, Bowden, and Frazier, 1981).
- C. This section contained two items from the Satisfaction Change Scale (Guerney, 1977). These items were modified so that subjects were asked to rate their marital relationship before the birth of the baby and as it stands today.

IV. FAMILY INFORMATION

- A. 1. Do you have children? _____ yes _____ no
 If yes, list by relationship to you (eg son, step-daughter, adopted, etc.) their ages, and if they currently live with you:

Relationship	Age	Living With You (yes, no)
--------------	-----	---------------------------

2. Was your last pregnancy planned? _____ yes _____ no

3. Do you plan to have any more children? _____ yes _____ no
 If yes, how many? _____

- B. 1. Listed below are things which have bothered parents following the birth of their first child. Please indicate the extent to which each one bothered you by placing a check mark in the appropriate column.

This portion of the questionnaire included 26 items from the Hobbs Crisis Index (Hobbs, 1965).

2. Listed below are things which parents have enjoyed since the birth of their first child. Please indicate the extent to which each item has been true for you.

This portion contained 12 items from the Gratification Checklist (Russell, 1974).

- C. 1. During the time that you and your spouse are home together, IDEALLY, what percent of the time would each of you perform the following activities: (Example - if the activity were rocking the baby, you might ideally wish to see your spouse perform 70% of this activity, while you perform 30%. Note that 70% + 30% = 100%)

ACTIVITY	% OF TIME FATHER		% OF TIME MOTHER
1. Changing the baby's diapers	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
2. Bathing the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
3. Playing with the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
4. Feeding the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
5. Comforting distressed baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
6. Dressing the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
7. Putting the baby to sleep	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
8. Reading to the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%

9. Arranging for a sitter	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
10. Caring for a sick baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%

2. During the time that you and your spouse are home together, IN REALITY, what percent of the time do each of you perform the following activities:

ACTIVITY	% OF TIME FATHER		% OF TIME MOTHER
1. Changing the baby's diapers	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
2. Bathing the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
3. Playing with the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
4. Feeding the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
5. Comforting distressed baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
6. Dressing the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
7. Putting the baby to sleep	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
8. Reading to the baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
9. Arranging for a sitter	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%
10. Caring for a sick baby	_____ %	+	_____ % = 100%

V. This final section of the questionnaire included the 48 items of the Life Role Salience Scales (Amatea, Cross, Clark, and Bobby, 1986).

APPENDIX D
TITLE LIST

A-1	Changing the Baby's Diapers
A-2	Bathing the Baby
A-3	Playing with the Baby
A-4	Feeding the Baby
A-5	Comforting the Distressed Baby
A-6	Dressing the Baby
A-7	Putting the Baby to Sleep
A-8	Reading to the Baby
A-9	Arranging for a Sitter
A-10	Caring for a Sick Baby

TABLE A-1
 FREQUENCY TABULATIONS OF MALES' AND FEMALES' PERCEPTIONS
 OF "IDEAL" AND "REAL" TIME SPENT CHANGING THE
 BABY'S DIAPERS IN THE THREE EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES OF WIFE
 WORKING FULL-TIME (FT), WIFE WORKING PART-TIME (PT), OR
 WIFE NOT WORKING (NW)

ASCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF TIME FOR TASK PERFORMANCE BY SEX		PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				
		FT	PT	N#	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
MALE (n=150)									
0-25		1	-	2	3(20.0)	2	2	1	5(3.3)
26-50		27	33	23	83(55.3)	13	18	8	39(26.0)
51-75		15	9	5	29(19.3)	17	17	17	51(34.0)
76-100		7	8	20	35(23.3)	18	13	24	55(36.7)
FEMALE (n=150)									
0-25		-	2	-	2(1.3)	-	2	-	2(1.3)
26-50		37	38	31	106(70.7)	14	15	15	44(29.3)
51-75		13	9	11	33(22.0)	22	22	11	55(36.7)
76-100		-	1	8	9(6.0)	14	11	24	49(32.7)

TABLE A-1 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION			
FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
11	8	22	41(27.3)	20	13	25	58(38.7)
38	40	26	104(69.3)	25	34	21	80(53.3)
-	2	-	2(1.3)	4	2	3	9(6.0)
1	-	2	3(2.0)	1	1	1	3(2.0)
-	3	11	14(9.3)	16	14	26	56(37.3)
47	45	39	131(87.3)	32	34	23	89(59.3)
3	2	-	5(3.3)	2	2	1	5(3.3)
-	-	-	-(0)	-	-	-	-(0)

TABLE A-2
 FREQUENCY TABULATIONS OF MALES' AND FEMALES' PERCEPTIONS
 OF "IDEAL" AND "REAL" TIME SPENT BATHING THE
 BABY IN THE THREE EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES OF WIFE
 WORKING FULL-TIME (FT), WIFE WORKING PART-TIME (PT), OR
 WIFE NOT WORKING (NW)

ASCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF TIME FOR TASK PERFORMANCE BY SEX	PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			TOT(%)	PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			TOT(%)
	FT	PT	NW		FT	PT	NW	
MALE (n=150)								
0-25	4	4	-	8(5.3)	5	3	-	8(5.3)
26-50	26	24	23	73(48.7)	12	11	23	46(30.7)
51-75	6	6	6	18(12.0)	5	12	6	23(15.3)
76-100	14	16	21	51(34.0)	28	24	21	73(48.7)
FEMALE (n=150)								
0-25	-	2	-	2(1.3)	-	2	-	2(1.3)
26-50	37	38	31	106(70.7)	14	15	15	44(29.3)
51-75	13	9	11	33(22.0)	22	22	11	55(36.7)
76-100	-	1	8	9(6.0)	14	11	24	49(32.7)

TABLE A-2 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION			
FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
15	19	22	56(37.3)	28	28	34	90(60.0)
30	21	25	76(50.7)	14	17	16	47(31.3)
-	3	3	11(7.3)	3	2	-	5(3.3)
5	2	-	7(4.7)	5	3	-	8(5.3)
9	13	17	39(26.0)	26	27	32	85(56.7)
35	29	30	94(62.7)	13	10	14	42(28.0)
3	4	1	8(5.3)	2	10	1	13(8.7)
3	4	2	9(6.0)	4	3	3	10(6.7)

TABLE A-3
 FREQUENCY TABULATIONS OF MALES' AND FEMALES' PERCEPTIONS
 OF "IDEAL" AND "REAL" TIME SPENT PLAYING WITH THE
 BABY IN THE THREE EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES OF WIFE
 WORKING FULL-TIME (FT), WIFE WORKING PART-TIME (PT), OR
 WIFE NOT WORKING (NW)

ASCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF TIME FOR TASK PERFORMANCE BY SEX	PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
<u>MALE (n=150)</u>								
0-25	-	-	1	1(.7)	3	-	1	4(2.7)
26-50	44	44	38	126(84.0)	32	42	27	101(67.3)
51-75	5	6	7	18(12.0)	12	8	19	39(26.0)
76-100	1	-	4	5(3.3)	3	-	3	6(4.0)
<u>FEMALE (n=150)</u>								
0-25	-	-	5	5(3.3)	2	3	2	7(4.7)
26-50	45	50	35	130(87.7)	27	37	28	92(61.3)
51-75	5	-	9	14(9.3)	19	10	14	43(28.7)
76-100	-	-	1	1(.7)	2	-	6	8(5.3)

TABLE A-3 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION			
PT	PT	HW	TOT(%)	PT	PT	HW	TOT(%)
1	1	6	8(5.3)	3	-	3	6(4.0)
45	44	37	126(84.0)	39	39	40	118(78.7)
4	5	6	15(10.0)	5	11	6	22(314.7)
-	-	1	1(.7)	3	-	1	4(2.7)
-	-	1	1(.7)	3	-	8	11(7.3)
48	44	42	134(89.3)	42	40	36	118(73.7)
2	6	5	13(8.7)	5	8	4	17(11.3)
-	-	2	2(1.3)	-	2	2	4(2.7)

TABLE A-4
 FREQUENCY TABULATIONS OF MALES' AND FEMALES' PERCEPTIONS
 OF "IDEAL" AND "REAL" TIME SPENT FEEDING THE
 BABY IN THE THREE EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES OF WIFE
 WORKING FULL-TIME (FT), WIFE WORKING PART-TIME (PT), OR
 WIFE NOT WORKING (NW)

ASCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF TIME FOR TASK PERFORMANCE BY SEX	PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
MALE (n=150)								
0-25	3	-	1	4(2.7)	4	-	1	5(3.3)
26-50	36	34	20	90(60.0)	16	17	9	42(28.0)
51-75	8	13	15	36(24.0)	18	21	15	54(36.0)
76-100	3	3	14	20(13.3)	12	21	25	49(32.7)
FEMALE (n=150)								
0-25	-	-	5	5(3.3)	1	-	4	5(3.3)
26-50	33	42	23	98(65.3)	14	22	10	46(30.7)
51-75	14	5	13	32(21.3)	20	18	6	44(29.3)
76-100	3	3	3	14(9.3)	15	10	29	54(36.0)

TABLE A-4 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION			
FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
6	3	15	24(16.0)	12	12	27	51(34.0)
40	40	34	114(76.0)	29	35	20	84(56.0)
3	6	-	9(6.0)	4	3	2	9(6.0)
1	1	1	3(2.0)	5	-	1	6(4.0)
3	3	10	16(10.7)	18	14	29	61(40.7)
43	41	33	117(78.0)	28	34	15	77(51.3)
4	6	3	13(8.7)	3	2	1	6(4.0)
-	-	3	3(2.0)	1	-	4	5(3.3)

TABLE A-5
 FREQUENCY TABULATIONS OF MALES' AND FEMALES' PERCEPTIONS
 OF "IDEAL" AND "REAL" TIME SPENT COMFORTING THE
 DISTRESSED BABY IN THE THREE EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES OF WIFE
 WORKING FULL-TIME (FT), WIFE WORKING PART-TIME (PT), OR
 WIFE NOT WORKING (NW)

ASCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF TIME FOR TASK PERFORMANCE BY SEX	PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
	PT		NW		PT		NW	
	TOT(%)		TOT(%)		TOT(%)		TOT(%)	
MALE (n=150)								
0-25	-	-	1	1(.7)	-	-	1	1 (.7)
26-50	40	39	31	110(73.3)	28	24	18	70(46.7)
51-75	7	9	9	25(16.7)	17	23	21	61(40.7)
76-100	3	2	9	14(9.3)	5	3	10	18(12.0)
FEMALE (n=150)								
0-25	-	-	3	3(2.0)	-	-	3	3(2.0)
26-50	33	32	32	97(64.7)	15	26	12	53(35.3)
51-75	14	17	12	43(28.7)	20	14	13	47(31.3)
76-100	3	1	3	7(4.7)	15	10	22	47(31.3)

TABLE A-5 continued

	PERCEPTION OF IDEAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION			PERCEPTION OF REAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION		
	PT	NW	TOT(%)	PT	NW	TOT(%)
3	2	10	15(10.0)	5	4	17
						26(17.3)
45	40	38	123(82.0)	44	38	31
						113(75.3)
2	7	2	11(7.3)	1	8	2
						11(7.3)
-	1	1	2(1.3)	-	-	-
						-(0)
3	5	5	13(8.7)	18	17	22
						57(38.3)
44	42	42	128(85.3)	31	28	25
						84(56.0)
3	3	-	6(4.0)	1	5	-
						6(4.0)
-	-	3	3(2.0)	-	-	3
						3(2.0)

TABLE A-6 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL MALE TASK ALLOCATION			
PT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	PT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
10	6	21	37(24.7)	20	14	26	60(40.0)
39	40	27	106(70.7)	27	34	22	83(55.3)
1	4	1	6(4.0)	3	2	2	7(4.7)
-	-	1	1(.7)	-	-	-	-(0)
9	9	14	32(21.3)	27	25	30	82(54.7)
38	39	34	111(74.0)	19	21	19	59(39.3)
3	2	-	5(3.3)	4	4	-	8(5.3)
-	-	2	2(1.3)	-	-	1	1(.7)

TABLE A-7
 FREQUENCY TABULATIONS OF MALES' AND FEMALES' PERCEPTIONS
 OF "IDEAL" AND "REAL" TIME SPENT PUTTING THE
 BABY TO SLEEP IN THE THREE EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES OF WIFE
 WORKING FULL-TIME (FT), WIFE WORKING PART-TIME (PT), OR
 WIFE NOT WORKING (NW)

ASCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF TIME FOR TASK PERFORMANCE BY SEX	PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
MALE (n=150)								
0-25	3	-	1	3 (2.0)	6	7	1	14(9.3)
26-50	39	44	33	116(77.3)	22	25	15	62(41.3)
51-75	4	4	9	17(11.3)	10	15	16	41(27.3)
76-100	4	2	8	14(9.3)	12	3	18	33(22.0)
FEMALE (n=150)								
0-25	2	2	-	4(2.7)	5	9	-	14(9.3)
26-50	34	44	28	106(70.7)	16	15	8	39(26.0)
51-75	6	2	8	16(10.7)	11	16	10	37(24.7)
76-100	8	2	14	24(16.0)	18	10	32	60(40.0)

TABLE A-7 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
4	2	10	16(10.7)	12	5	20	37(24.7)
39	40	36	115(76.7)	27	35	25	87(58.0)
4	8	4	16(10.7)	7	5	5	17(11.3)
3	-	-	3(2.0)	4	5	-	9(6.0)
8	3	15	26(17.3)	18	19	32	69(46.0)
37	41	34	112(74.7)	25	14	14	53(35.3)
3	4	1	8(5.3)	4	8	4	16(10.7)
2	2	-	4(2.7)	3	9	-	12(8.0)

TABLE A-8
FREQUENCY TABULATIONS OF MALES' AND FEMALES' PERCEPTIONS
OF "IDEAL" AND "REAL" TIME SPENT READING TO THE BABY
IN THE THREE EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES OF WIFE
WORKING FULL-TIME (FT), WIFE WORKING PART-TIME (PT), OR
WIFE NOT WORKING (NW)

ASCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF TIME FOR TASK PERFORMANCE BY SEX	PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION		
	FT	PT	TOT(%)	FT	PT	TOT(%)
MALE (n=150)						
0-25	1	-	1(.7)	2	-	3(2.0)
26-50	40	38	115(76.7)	22	24	69(46.0)
51-75	5	7	20(13.3)	7	11	25(16.7)
76-100	3	5	12(8.0)	12	14	42(26.7)
FEMALE (n=150)						
0-25	4	-	3 7 (4.7)	4	1	3 8(5.3)
26-50	40	48	33 121(80.7)	24	27	18 69(46.0)
51-75	6	2	6 14(9.3)	4	7	10 21(14.0)
76-100	-	-	7 7(4.7)	11	13	18 42(28.0)

TABLE A-8 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
4	6	3	13(8.7)	16	16	18	50(33.3)
43	39	44	126(84.0)	26	30	27	83(55.3)
1	5	2	8(5.3)	1	3	2	6(4.0)
1	-	-	1(.7)	-	-	-	-(.0)
1	-	9	10(6.7)	14	14	20	48(32.0)
44	46	36	126(84.0)	26	30	23	79(52.7)
2	4	1	7(4.7)	2	3	3	8(5.3)
3	-	3	6(4.0)	1	1	3	5(3.3)

TABLE A-9 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	FT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
19	20	25	64(42.7)	29	35	36	100(66.7)
31	29	22	82(54.7)	17	14	11	42(28.0)
-	-	1	.7	-	-	-	-(.0)
-	-	2	2(1.3)	3	-	2	5(3.3)
12	14	23	49(32.7)	27	38	43	108(72.0)
35	32	24	91(60.7)	18	10	6	34(22.7)
3	2	1	6(4.0)	2	-	-	2(1.3)
-	2	1	3(2.0)	1	2	-	3(2.0)

TABLE A-10
 FREQUENCY TABULATIONS OF MALES' AND FEMALES' PERCEPTIONS
 OF "IDEAL" AND "REAL" TIME SPENT CARING FOR A SICK
 BABY IN THE THREE EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES OF WIFE
 WORKING FULL-TIME (FT), WIFE WORKING PART-TIME (PT), OR
 WIFE NOT WORKING (NW)

ASCRIBED PERCENTAGE OF TIME FOR TASK PERFORMANCE BY SEX	PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
	PT		NW		PT		NW	
	FT	TOT(%)	FT	TOT(%)	FT	TOT(%)	FT	TOT(%)
MALE (n=150)								
0-25	-	-	-	-(.0)	1	-	-	1(.7)
26-50	39	34	26	99(66.0)	26	27	15	68(45.3)
51-75	6	12	7	25(16.7)	10	17	13	40(26.7)
76-100	5	4	17	26(17.3)	10	5	22	37(24.7)
FEMALE (n=150)								
0-25	-	-	-	-(.0)	-	-	-	-(.0)
26-50	27	32	28	87(58.0)	19	25	19	63(42.0)
51-75	13	10	11	34(22.7)	12	11	6	29(19.3)
76-100	10	8	11	29(19.3)	17	13	25	55(36.7)

TABLE A-10 continued

PERCEPTION OF IDEAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION				PERCEPTION OF REAL FEMALE TASK ALLOCATION			
PT	PT	NW	TOT(%)	PT	PT	NW	TOT(%)
8	5	18	31(20.7)	10	6	23	39(26.0)
41	41	32	114(76.0)	36	39	27	102(68.0)
1	4	-	5(3.3)	1	4	-	5(3.3)
-	-	-	-(.0)	-	-	-	-(.0)
12	8	14	34(22.7)	21	14	26	41(27.3)
37	42	36	115(76.7)	27	34	24	85(56.7)
1	-	-	1(.7)	-	1	-	1(.7)
-	-	-	-(.0)	-	-	-	-(.0)

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Carol L. Bobby was born and reared in Ohio. As a young adult, she attended Ohio University where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree with dual majors in psychology and English in 1977. While pursuing this degree, Ms Bobby received training in crisis intervention techniques which enabled her to obtain a job in this field following graduation. Through her work with both volunteers and professionals in the field of crisis intervention and suicide prevention, Ms Bobby obtained a working knowledge of the education and training required for successful counselor intervention; hence, a return to college was imminent. In January, 1980, Ms Bobby entered the Specialist of Education degree program in the Counselor Education Department at the University of Florida. She was awarded a Master of Education and a Specialist of Education degree from this department in December, 1981. During that year, Ms Bobby was also accepted in the doctoral program to further her studies. While in Florida, Ms Bobby completed four practica and two internships. These experiences were arranged with the Alachua County Crisis Center in Gainesville, Florida, and with the Community Counseling Center in Bronson, Florida. At the Crisis Center, Ms Bobby was honored with permission to co-lead an ongoing group for repeat suicide attempters. The uniqueness of this group experience provided the co-leaders with an opportunity to present their

group model at the National Convention for the American Association of Suicidology in 1981. While at the Community Counseling Center, Ms Bobby interned as a counselor in their children's program. This opportunity enhanced her knowledge and skills in her speciality area of marriage and family therapy.

Upon her move to Alexandria, Virginia, Ms Bobby was hired by the American Association of Counseling and Development (AACD). While with AACD, she worked for the National Board for Certified Counselors, and subsequently became a National Certified Counselor. Continuing her interest in counselor certification procedures, Ms Bobby assumed the directorship of the National Academy for Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors from August, 1983, through August, 1984. Currently, Ms Bobby is pursuing the status of Licensed Professional Counselor in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Ellen S. Amatea
Ellen S. Amatea, Chairperson
Associate Professor of
Counselor Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Robert D. Myrick
Robert D. Myrick
Professor of Counselor
Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Constance Shehan
Constance Shehan
Assistant Professor of
Sociology

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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